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EDITORIAL

LIBYAN MELODRAMA

World politics, incredibly, have sunk to a "you *are*, too" shouting match between the American President and the Libyan dictator. It is a contest of paranoias: which leader really intends to assassinate his rival? The truth is that neither Ronald Reagan nor Muammar el-Qaddafi has reasons to get rid of the other. Each benefits from this absurd media confrontation. The Libyan's stature swells in Arab eyes as Washington seemingly trembles before his shadowy "hit men." Reagan diverts attention from his real problems at home by turning up the volume on his broken record entitled "International Terrorism," featuring the Haig-Weinberger Chorus.

The press's role in this darkly-lit melodrama of offstage noises is troubling. It has bannered the "leaks" that the White House now claims to deplore. It has been shamelessly manipulated by whatever "intelligence" sources have a stake in promoting this show. Almost nowhere is the obvious connection made to Reagan's December 4 executive order allowing domestic spying by the Central Intelligence Agency. The Libyan caper prepares the way for the return of Big Brother by seeming to justify it.

To be sure, the Libyan dictator has shown himself capable of orchestrating overseas death squads, but we must question the Administration's motive in so loudly trumpeting the hit-men charges. Certainly quieter diplomatic channels could have been used to warn Qaddafi, rather than the airwaves. What is the purpose of attempting to create public fear of terrorism? This is a nervous, fidgety Administration, anxious to justify repressive measures at home and adventurism abroad. In doing so, it repeatedly calls attention to its weakness and unreliability. The great Libyan Plot neatly fits that pattern.

THE BATTLE FOR THE N.E.H.
John S. Friedman

JAPAN RE-ARMS ITS TEXTBOOKS
Donald Kirk

INSIDE A U.S.-SOVIET ARMS NEGOTIATION
Dale Van Atta

'NO PLACE OF GRACE'
Ann Douglas

PICTURES FROM A REVOLUTION
D. D. Guttenplan

CAVEAT THAT ANTI-NEOLOGY
Jim Quinn

WEATHERMANIA

WHITE HEAT UNDERGROUND

TODD GITLIN

When Bill Ayers surfaced from the Weather Underground with Bernardine Dohrn last year, he told reporters he felt like the Japanese soldier who, many years after World War II had ended, surrendered to U.S. forces on Guam. On October 20, when gun blasts killed a Brink's guard and two police officers near Nyack, New York, it was as if another Japanese soldier had burst from behind the bushes—only this time his guns were blazing. The eeriness and the horror came not only from the bloodshed but from the sense of disjunction. It was bad melodrama—the fantasies of one decade materialized in another. But then it wasn't melodrama at all, for what grew out of the barrel of a gun, it turned out, was not political power but death.

Reporters and New Left veterans groped for understanding, even for metaphors. At first, the *New York Post* called the alleged killers a "Bonnie & Clyde gang"; the next day, after Kathy Boudin had been identified as one of the group, they became a "terror gang" and a "gang of hate." For the *Post*, hysteria is what sells papers. But if one pulled back from the hysteria, there still remained much puzzlement. What had brought supposedly intelligent activists to this pass? Why had they opened fire on the Brink's guards without first calling out a warning or a command? Why had they used an easily identifiable yellow Honda as a getaway car, and in particular a yellow Honda that belonged to Eve Rosahn, who had been arrested only a short time before the Brink's robbery for throwing battery acid at Port Authority police officers during a demonstration against the South African rugby team at Kennedy International Airport? The

(*Continued on Page 669*)

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LETTERS.

HOLOCAUST COFFEE-TABLE BOOKS

New York City

As a longtime *Nation* reader who takes particular pleasure in and has particular respect for the Books & the Arts section, I was appalled at Lesley Hazleton's review of the Hellman, Salomon, and Blatter and Milton books on Holocaust art and photographs ["'The Esthetic View of Death,'" Nov. 21]. Her view is a skewed and distorted one—she places the books on her "coffee table" and thus suggests that such works are simply exploitative and of interest to the callous who would buy them and to the Holocaust industry that would profit from them. These books (and others like them), to the contrary, are historical documents intended to inform and remind. Some include real works of art, others suggest the pain and politics of the era, still others record the unspeakable. They were conceived as fitting memorials as well as scholarly contributions. I think they have fulfilled their goals. Hazleton prefers to see such material remain in Yad Vashem, but she would be the first to decry our "short memories" if, in fact, they remained the concern of only an interested few.

Marion Kaplan

HAZELTON REPLIES

New York City

If the packaging of a bunch of photographs taken by a Nazi guard as a present to his lover is a "fitting memorial" or a "scholarly contribution" to the Holocaust, then there is something horribly skewed in the way we now see the Holocaust.

The callous will not buy such books; the sentimental will. An exploration of the relationship between callousness and sentimentality would be fascinating, and these books may well be a case for study. My view is that they provide an easy and superficial identification with a media image of the Holocaust, glossing over the denigration and dehumanization analyzed by more scholarly—and largely ignored—works like Jean Améry's *At the Mind's Limits* (University of Indiana Press, 1980).

Lesley Hazleton

RATING REAGAN: EDUCATION

Tuscon, Ariz.

I enjoyed reading the excellent rating-Reagan symposium in the November 7 issue, but I was saddened and dismayed that, once again, education was ignored by the left. I found only a single reference in all of the articles to education, even though no aspect of American society has been more severely undercut by the Reagan government.

Federal education expenditures have been cut 10 percent this year. Proposed for next year are cuts of nearly 50 percent. By dissolving the Department of Education and utilizing block grants, the Administration hopes to decrease the visibility of this demolition campaign. These measures are offered in the name of economy, deregulation and local control. In fact, they will wipe out not only the economic base for educational equity but also any effective control of educational segregation and discrimination.

This Administration has dedicated itself to an attack on the cornerstone of American political and social democracy: the common school. The Administration has made two major moves in this direction. It has called for tuition tax credits, in effect a Federal subsidy for private schools, and it has proposed that block-grant funds be shared between private and public schools. Public schools are already greatly weakened by declining state and local support. If the middle class takes its children out of public schools, they will cease to be common schools and will instead become pauper schools. But the middle class will suffer too. The cost of maintaining competing school systems will be enormous, and the net result will be inferior education for all.

Free public education has been the political and social policy of this country for most of this century. The Reagan Administration seeks to return us to a policy that makes education the responsibility of each family within its means. In contemporary American society almost two of three households have no school-age children. Perhaps that explains why so few voices, even on the left, have been raised in defense of the right of all children to equal access to knowledge.

Kenneth S. Goodman
Professor of Education
University of Arizona

REPLY

See editorial, "Equal Education," The Nation, *Sept 19.* —*The Editors*

NO MORE MR. NICE GUY

New York City

Unlike Mark Green ["Rating Reagan: Trendlines, Faultlines," *The Nation*, Nov. 7], Murray Kempton, the editorial board of *The New York Times* and other hesitant objectors to the present Administration's policies, I don't find Ronald Reagan "damned nice," charming, decisive, agreeable or any of the other epithets that have been lavished upon his personal, as against his political, self.

I think Reagan is an outrageous ham with a phony grandstand smile for all comers and all occasions. I think he lacks dignity. He personifies a Hollywood stereotype that I find unacceptable, and even ludicrous.

Politically, it's another story, or is it? Reagan is a hard-fisted, unscrupulous politico who uses any means to gain his ends, and his ends consistently enhance the already intolerable wealth and power of the American corporate structure and its overfed beneficiaries.

There's no dichotomy between Reagan the person and Reagan the politico. And I wish that *The Nation* would distinguish itself from the rank and vile of the media by refusing to perpetuate the myth of Reagan as a man of charm and good will.

Ben Hellman

BORN-AGAIN DYLAN

Newton, Mass.

Carol Flake's piece on Bob Dylan's *Shot of Love* ["Pop Music," *The Nation*, Oct. 31] is an egregious example of shallow journalism that sacrifices perceptiveness for glib remarks. Flake rehashes all the most routine things to say about Dylan's Christianity, scoring high only in the catch-phrases-per-sentence competition. About the author of "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" (not to mention the grim, sad, haunting "Lenny Bruce," whose point Flake misses entirely) Flake imagines it is clever to write, "Dylan is indeed becoming a voice in the wilderness." She apparently believes the measure of artistic success is the number of converts to the creed that informs the art. Let her reread *Four Quartets*.

Shot of Love is one of the best albums by America's greatest singer/poet. In calling its religion "unevenly sugarcoated" Flake proves she hasn't heard the album. I'm not a Christian, but I'm awake enough to hear the intelligent anger, the angry humor and the poignant vulnerability in these songs.

Mark Halliday

FLAKE REPLIES

Boston

I regret that Mark Halliday did not find "intelligent anger," "angry humor" and "poignant vulnerability" in my review.

Carol Flake

ONE GOOD TURN

Washington, D.C.

Just about the time I had concluded that either *The Nation* did not consider the Greek and interrelated Cyprus situation to be sufficiently important for comment, or that other, more pressing matters demanded the magazine's attention, your editorial "The Greeks' Turn" appeared [Oct. 31]. Congratulations! The writer's allusions are evidence enough that he is informed on the subject. Now, it is no less important to carry on at least until the 200,000 refugees are returned to their homes.

George C. Vournas

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Company We Keep

Losing votes in the United Nations is routine by now for the United States and does not ordinarily concern the government. Yet the Reagan Administration should be alarmed at the recent vote in the Third Committee on a resolution condemning human-rights abuses in El Salvador.

The resolution, adopted on December 3, was scarcely mentioned by the U.S. press. Citing "the persistence of a situation in which governmental paramilitary organizations and other armed groups continue to act with total contempt for life, security and tranquility of the civilian population," it calls on all nations, including the United States, "to abstain from intervening in the internal situation in Salvador and suspend all supplies of arms and [illegible] military support." The vote was 65 in favor and 21 opposed. There were 54 abstentions.

More significant than these numbers, however, was the distribution of the vote. Only one of the twenty countries that joined the United States in opposing the resolution was a North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally—Turkey. France, West Germany, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway voted in favor of the resolution, while other U.S. allies like Canada, Britain, Australia, Japan and New Zealand abstained.

Speaking against the resolution, U.S. representative to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick argued that "the moral quality of the government of El Salvador is attested . . . by the willingness of its leaders to submit themselves to the judgment of the people in competitive elections." She [illegible] point out, however, that hundreds of opposi[illegible] assassinated by government agents

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during the past two years. Among them were the six top leaders of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, who were kidnapped from a political meeting in November 1980, mutilated and murdered. As long as opponents of the present government in El Salvador face a similar fate, elections in that country cannot be taken seriously.

After reciting further proof of the "moral quality" of the Salvadoran government, Kirkpatrick asked: "But what of the violence? If the government of El Salvador is filled with good men—with democrats and reformers—why is there continuing violence against the civilian population from the government side?" Answering herself, Kirkpatrick asserted: "First, the insurgency has penetrated the population and attempts to hide itself within it—so that fighting violent insurgents spills over into the society; and second, that the government is not strong enough to effectively claim a monopoly on the use of coercion."

In other words, the U.S. representative to the United Nations told the assembled delegates of the nations of the world, the government of El Salvador, possessed of a "moral quality," is indiscriminately murdering the civilian population because anyone might be an insurgent. Furthermore, since it now does not have a "monopoly on the use of coercion," it should be strengthened militarily, presumably so that it can murder more effectively. Little wonder that few who listened to her were persuaded and that only a single NATO ally, the one with the worst human-rights record, joined us.

They're No Angels

The only reason President Ronald Reagan's recent executive order permitting the Central Intelligence Agency to engage in covert domestic activities cannot be called unleashing the agency is that the original leash was so long. Yet the President said of the Carter Administration's policy, which his order superseded: "An approach that emphasizes suspicion and mistrust of our own intelligence efforts can undermine this nation's ability to confront the increasing challenge of espionage and terrorism. This is particularly true in a world in which our adversaries pay no heed to the concerns for individual rights and freedoms that are so important to Americans and their government. As we move into the 1980s, we need to free ourselves from the negative attitudes of the past and look to meeting the needs of the country."

In addition to implying that our enemies in the 1780s and 1790s entertained a tender regard for our liberties and that the fledgling American government faced national security threats less pressing than those we face today—and thus could afford the luxury of a Bill of Rights, which assumes that unrestrained government officials might not always pay heed to individual rights and freedoms—Reagan's statement reveals a profound contempt for the values underlying the Constitution. When he recently spoke at the dedication of the Madison Building of the Library of Congress, the President ought to have recalled James Madison's justification of the Constitution in *The Federalist Papers* (Number 51): "If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary." Few angels have been sighted recently in the upper levels of the intelligence agencies.

Shirley's People

The British electorate, as one sage observed recently, has been fighting a very dirty campaign. It appears to say one thing and mean another. Its election promises are hardly worth the paper they are printed on. Only a short while ago, it decided by a large majority for Thatcherism. Now, if the right-thinking middlebrow analysts are to be believed, it wants social democracy.

This is an odd business. Britain has been governed by the principles of social democracy since the end of World War II. The politicians who head up the new Social Democratic Party (S.D.P.) have between them several decades of ministerial office. They were all key figures in unsuccessful and unpopular governments. Yet now they appear to radiate the magic and the freshness of an idea whose time has come. Even the Liberal Party, an etiolated survivor of the lost world of Gladstone and Asquith, suddenly portrays itself as new, exciting and (a key word) "relevant."

It would be fair to say that the British people are predominantly "social democratic" in temper. Broadly speaking, they favor welfare but dislike nationalization (unless of bankrupt utilities like railways). They are anti-Communist but not obsessed with weapons superiority. They are suspicious of foreigners but more or less resigned to membership in the European Common Market. They believe, like the classic British empirical philosophers, that the truth of any proposition will lie somewhere near the middle. They are thus, and have always been, a pushover for consensus politics. With the S.D.P., consensus has reached the status almost of a religious belief.

Some have seen in Mr. Roy Jenkins and Mrs. (decidedly not Ms.) Shirley Williams the ideas of a Walter Mondale or a Paul Tsongas—a renovated liberalism free of collectivist and bureaucratic taint. No such luck (if you call that luck). The S.D.P.'s first premise is a repudiation of everything that liberals and radicals have in common. The party is—insofar as it cares to spell out a policy—in favor of nuclear weapons and nuclear power. It supports only the most nebulous "participation" schemes in industry. Mrs. Williams blamed the summer rioting among black and white unemployed youths on the influence of Leon Trotsky in the Labor Party. It proposes tax rebates for employers who take on jobless school-leavers—as if unemployment were not already over 3 million and rising. It has no trade union base and no plans for attracting one.

Indeed, there is a thick volume of things that it does not say. It has no policy on Northern Ireland. It has no policy for the decaying urban centers (which is not so startling once you discover how many corrupt and discredited city boss politicians have opportunistically joined it). It has nothing

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to say about the House of Lords, the public school (that is, the private school) system or any of the anachronistic class barriers that still disfigure the country. And, since so many of its leading members are from the board rooms, it is distinctly muted about the long-term refusal of British capital to invest in industry.

The S.D.P. did not begin like other parties or movements in some great struggle or schism. It was cloned from the British establishment fully-clothed and equipped. Despite its impressive showing in the recent by-elections, it still has more members in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons—something of a record. And, for an untried party in an increasingly poor country, it is impressively well-heeled.

Of course, the disaster of Thatcherism and the decay of the Labor Party have compelled some idealistic and excellent people to change allegiances. Within the S.D.P.'s ranks, there are people of high motivation. No American journalist (not even the saintly Anthony Lewis or the sweet R.W. Apple) pointed out, for instance, that the recently victorious S.D.P.-Liberal candidate at Croydon was an active member of European Nuclear Disarmament. But, sad to say, these elements are merely decorative. So is the hope that the new alliance can "break the mold" of British politics. At the next election it will either spoil enough Labor votes to insure that Thatcher gets a second term or, just conceivably, it will be able to form a government on its own. I think that the Tory vote is holding up well enough to make the first contingency the one to bet on. But what would the second one mean? Nothing but the postwar mixture as before. Certainly, nothing else is being promised. The "mold," so far from being broken, is actually being preserved. For all the hurrahs, the rise of the S.D.P. is an episode in the long-term decline of Britain, and not the cure for it.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Christopher Hitchens, a contributing editor of The Nation, *is a member of the British Labor Party.*

Defense Trust

Senator Howard Baker, from whom we do not normally expect fresh ideas, came up with a good one the other week. Actually, it was better than he knew. Worried that Congress' reluctance to make further cuts in funding for social programs would create pressures to reduce the military budget, Senator Baker proposed that defense spending be financed out of a national trust fund established with revenues from "almost an infinite variety of taxes."

Increases in the military budget involve more than the traditional guns-or-butter dilemma, the politics of which were the Senator's main worry. In the past, major jumps in military spending have been financed by budget deficits and increases in the money supply, which add to inflationary pressures. This was the case during the Vietnam War and promises to be the case with the current buildup.

A way to attack the military-spending inflation spiral would be for Congress to pass a special withholding tax, like the Social Security tax, designed to finance defense spending. It would work this way: each year, when Congress enacts its defense appropriations bill, it would pass a companion revenue bill authorizing the taxes necessary to pay for new defense spending. The Internal Revenue Service would then compute the withholding tax rates required to raise this amount. Congress would be required to pay for defense appropriations with tax revenues in the defense trust, and deficit financing would be prohibited. With deficit spending banned, one of the main inflationary pressures of a large military buildup would be removed.

Furthermore, with the defense tax deduction appearing on their paychecks, taxpayers would know exactly how much they are paying to support the defense establishment, and we could assume that there would be greater public support for Congressional scrutiny of Pentagon waste. In short, an anti-defense-tax constituency would be created. Moreover, defense spending would have an upper limit pegged to a certain percentage of the gross national product or total Federal revenues. It could only exceed this figure upon the request of the President and approval by both houses of Congress. The ceiling would be automatically lifted by a Congressional declaration of war. Thus, deficit financing for defense would have been permissible during World War II, but not during the Korean and Vietnam wars. The Administration's current buildup would have to be financed on a pay-as-you-go basis.

One might propose alternate forms of "revenue enhancements," as they are calling new taxes in Washington these days, to fight inflation and call public attention to cost overruns within the military. After all, we now have "sin taxes," so why not war taxes as well? One that comes to mind is a tax on defense contractors that would be tied to the price of new weapon systems. Such a tax would recapture for the taxpayers at least some of the astronomical price increases of new weaponry—increases that in sheer hubris rival those imposed by OPEC.

DAVID GOLD

David Gold is an economist and defense policy analyst.

REASSURING WORDS

We have called Alexander Haig some impolite names, but never yet have we called him crazy. It remained for that brash reporter James Reston of *The New York Times* to ask him point-blank if he was. Reston did not report that Haig was agitated by the question. He is not a "rattle ass," as he told the *Times*man. Nor did he get mad, even though he is a firm believer in anger as a "management vehicle."

Well, we have had Richard Nixon assure us he is not a crook, and now we have Haig tell us he's not paranoid. The rumor that he is, he told Reston, "was planted and fed and nourished" . . . by whom he didn't say. By his *real* enemies?

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ARTICLES.

NEO-CON CULTURE COUP

The Battle for The N.E.H.

JOHN S. FRIEDMAN

President Ronald Reagan's selection of a new chairman for the National Endowment for the Humanities (N.E.H.) generated more infighting among his ostensible allies on the right than any other selection he has made. The protracted war of words between the supporters of William Bennett, director of the National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, who was the ultimate winner, and the partisans of Melvin Bradford, a professor of English at the University of Dallas, showed that conservative intellectuals regard the N.E.H. chairmanship as a major strategic weapon in the war of ideas. But Bennett's victory was attributable more to his professional connections than to his ideology.

Bradford, who had worked for Reagan's Presidential campaign and had served on the N.E.H. transition team, was the leading contender for the chairmanship until a group of neoconservatives publicly criticized him. A front-page story in *The New York Times* last September on the controversy portrayed the dispute as an ideological struggle between the neoconservatives and the far right. The article reported that if Bradford were nominated, Irving Kristol, editor of *The Public Interest* and a professor of social thought at New York University, and other leading neoconservatives would testify against him at his Senate confirmation hearings. They opposed Bradford, the article stated, because of his support for the Presidential candidacy of George Wallace in 1972 and because he had written articles critical of Abraham Lincoln.

But Kristol's disapproval of Bradford's opinions would seem to be of recent vintage. Five years ago, as a member of the N.E.H. advisory council, he interceded after Bradford's application for a grant to study the short stories of William Faulkner had been turned down. Minutes of a November 1976 meeting show that Kristol joined other conservatives on the advisory council in recommending that Bradford's application be reconsidered even though it had been rejected by an N.E.H. panel and by a committee appointed by the advisory council. According to the minutes:

> Mr. [Sidney] Hook suggested that the Chairman ask other experts to review this [Bradford's application] in addition to the experts who reviewed it the first time. The Chairman stated that this could orly be helpful. Mr. Kristol was in accord.

Ronald Berman, then chairman of the N.E.H., followed the recommendation of Hook and Kristol and appointed a panel of four scholars to review the proposal. According to sources at the endowment, this was a highly unusual procedure. The panel eventually approved Bradford's project, and he received a grant of $9,963. When I asked Kristol recently about the boost he had given Bradford in 1976, he said, "I have no recollection of ever having done that." But the question remains: Why is Kristol now so opposed to Bradford, a man he once championed?

Bradford has his own theory. "Kristol wanted his own boy for the endowment," he told me. "Kristol and I don't move in exactly the same circles. I never had the benefit of support from the network of foundations that he is involved in."

This network played a key role in determining who was to be the new chairman. It wanted someone who could be relied upon to represent its views. Bradford, a flamboyant Southerner given to talking indiscreetly to the press (he promised, for example, to place conservatives on more N.E.H. panels), was an unknown, a wild card. In contrast, Bennett moved in the right circles. He was a protégé of Charles Frankel at the National Humanities Center, a Harvard law school graduate and a former administrative assistant to John Silber, the president of Boston University.

Bennett is also on the board of directors of Midge Decter's Committee for the Free World [see editorial, "Culture War II," *The Nation*, April 18]. So is Kristol. Both men are on the board of directors of the Institute for Educational Affairs, a self-styled "clearinghouse" for financial assistance to worthy conservative projects conceived by Kristol and former Treasury Secretary William Simon [see Peter H. Stone, "The I.E.A.—Teaching the 'Right' Stuff," *The Nation*, September 19]. The institute received seed money in the form of $100,000 grants from the John M. Olin Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts and the J.M. Foundation—the four horsemen of ultraconservative funding. The I.E.A. has, in turn, given more than $7,500 to the National Humanities Center.

Bennett had assisted in the preparation of the section on the arts and the humanities in *Mandate for Leadership*, the Heritage Foundation's blueprint for the Reagan Administration prepared before the President's inauguration. The section was written by Michael Joyce, a former director of the Institute for Educational Affairs who is now executive director of the Olin Foundation. Not surprisingly, the Heritage and Olin foundations were strong Bennett backers. Bennett also was supported by White House chief of staff James Baker 3d and by Frank Hodsoll, Baker's former assistant, who was recently appointed chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Bradford's supporters included such old-line conservatives as Russell Kirk, Jeffrey Hart and William F. Buckley Jr., editor of *National Review*, to which Bradford has contributed articles. His staunchest defenders, however, were

John S. Friedman is a Washington, D.C.-based journalist who specializes in the politics of the arts.

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from the New Right, notably Senators John East and Jesse Helms of North Carolina. East, a friend of Bradford's (both served as editorial advisers to *Modern Age*, an academic quarterly), persuaded fifteen additional senators, including Orrin Hatch and Strom Thurmond, into signing a letter to the White House supporting Bradford's candidacy.

As the struggle heated up, Bradford went public, charging that Kristol and Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*, were among those blocking his appointment. Almost forgotten in the Bradford-Bennett tug of war were the three other candidates for the post: Robert Hollander, professor of comparative literature at Princeton; William Schaefer, executive vice chancellor at the University of California at Los Angeles, who was put out of the running by a scathing editorial in *National Review*, and Berman, whose reappointment was suggested as a compromise. The Administration delayed its decision for more than a month, and E. Pendleton James, White House chief of personnel, remarked, "I had no idea picking a chairman was so controversial. It took an inordinate amount of time."

When the Administration finally decided upon Bennett, President Reagan telephoned Senator East, who subsequently announced that he would not oppose the President's choice. (Senator Helms, however, has made no such pledge.) But according to White House and N.E.H. sources, East received a concession in return for his support. He reportedly was assured by the White House that he would have the right of approval on future appointments to the endowment's council (the terms of approximately one-third of the council's members expire in January). A spokesman for East said only that the Senator "will be interested in looking at the appointments" to make sure they are "balanced."

Although Bennett has turned aside questions on his plans for the endowment by saying, "I'll wait until I do my homework," the activities of the National Humanities Center provide some clue. For instance, the center conducts seminars and conferences on public policy issues, in addition to funding scholarly work. Thus Bennett might push the endowment into supporting projects aimed at influencing policy makers and public opinion. Certainly he can be expected to curtail current chairman Joseph Duffey's emphasis on making grants to minority groups. Bennett is the co-author of *Counting by Race: Equality in American Thought from the Founding Fathers to Bakke*, a scholarly attack on affirmative action. Admitting that he "generally" agrees with the Heritage Foundation report, which was critical of Duffey's "populist" policies, he will probably seek to channel grants to established academicians.

Although the N.E.H. chairman makes only a few grants himself, he can influence the selection of panel members, and he has a prestigious forum. The cachet N.E.H. funding gives to scholarly projects has a rebound effect on foundation assistance as well as on university grants and tenure decisions. As Edwin Feulner, president of the Heritage Foundation, observed, the chairman can shape "the bounds" of support by the N.E.H., and this has a ripple effect. Finally, the effective, ultimately decisive support that Kristol and other neoconservatives gave Bennett necessarily raises the question of what obligation he has incurred to them. Having "their man in the N.E.H." could give the neoconservatives a disproportionate leverage on its policies —and on the country's intellectual and cultural direction— for at least the next three years. □

THE NEW CENSORSHIP

Japan Re-Arms Its School Books

DONALD KIRK

Tokyo

For thirty-four years, Iri and Toshi Maruki have dedicated their art to a single theme: the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A series of fourteen of their paintings, collectively titled "Picture of the Atomic Bombing," evokes the immediate aftermath of a nuclear blast. Crowds of people are depicted amid fire and heat, wailing, collapsing, dying. The most macabre picture shows victims at the moment of death in an inferno of collapsing buildings. This painting was chosen to be the frontispiece of a textbook used in Modern Society, a new course in Japanese senior high schools.

The Ministry of Education, however, objected to the Marukis' picture, and a photograph of smiling youngsters captioned "Life Is Precious" was substituted for it in the published book. "Extremely tragic subjects will be removed from textbooks," explained a ministry official. In order not to be accused of trying to shield Japanese youth from the horror of nuclear war, the publishers were allowed to include a somewhat less gruesome painting by the Marukis in the latter part of the book.

The resolution of the incident might seem a typical Japanese compromise, but it was only one of numerous cases of textbook censorship in Japan. The ministry's "guidance" policies, as they are blandly termed, have disturbing overtones; they inevitably stir recollections of thought control in Japanese education during the pre-World War II era.

For the past year, inspectors from the Ministry of Education, concerned about what they regard as a "leftist" slant in school texts, have been harassing authors and publishers by demanding numerous, often petty revisions. Material construed to be antiwar, like the Marukis' painting, is a frequent target. The campaign has generated protests by the Japanese Teachers Union and the Federation of Publishing Workers, among other groups. A pamphlet issued recently by the publishing workers asked: "Where shall our children learn the importance of peace? . . . The people who attack the present textbooks are demanding militaristic education, trampling down the peace constitution and the basic education law."

These charges seem only slightly exaggerated. For exam-

Donald Kirk, the author of two books on Indochina, writes for The Nation *on international issues.*

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ple, one textbook came under fire because it stated that "interpretation and application of Article Nine of the Constitution have changed significantly"—a reference to the section declaring that "land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained." The publishers of the book were told to alter the offending phrase to convey the idea that the government was complying with Article Nine. Since Japan is now spending about $11.5 billion annually to support its euphemistically named Self Defense Forces, the original version seems a fair observation. Another publisher was advised to delete a line from one of its textbooks that referred to Japan's determination "to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples in the world."

At least thirteen such informal guidelines for textbooks used in Modern Society courses have been set, although the Ministry of Education has refused to make them public. Authors have also been urged to include definitions of the "patriotic mind," and to mention the importance of respect for the family and deference to the elderly.

Such sentiments remind many Japanese of the Emperor Meiji's Imperial Rescript on Education, promulgated in 1890, which emphasized obedience and the martial values. But textbook authors are also told by the ministry not to dwell on the old days, so students can gain no sense of the links between what they are being taught and prewar authoritarianism. Instead, authors are told to stress postwar politics and economics, particularly Japan's miraculous economic recovery. Similarly, criticism of business is discouraged. For example, authors are told not to mention corporations involved in bribery or pollution scandals. References to three American aircraft manufacturers, Lockheed, Grumman and McDonnell Douglas, which had been accused of bribing Japanese officials were deleted from one text.

The ministry has encouraged authors to emphasize the cold war in Modern Society texts. The names of the four small islands off Japan's northern coast that the Soviet Union occupied at the end of World War II were added to one text, followed by a reminder that these islands "belong to Japan" and that the Japanese government has demanded their return. Also added was an explanation of "the structure of the Cold War" and its history. Discussions of national defense now must cite opinion polls showing that a majority of Japanese view the Self Defense Forces as constitutional and quote from the 1954 law that authorized their creation. Charts and tables must demonstrate that the ratio of defense spending to gross national product is lower in Japan than in any other nation, and they must not show that the defense budget has been steadily rising in recent years.

Actually, a precedent for textbook censorship was set during the period of the American occupation of Japan after World War II. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, supreme allied commander at the time, sought to expunge all vestiges of prewar militarism from Japanese society. Accordingly, his headquarters issued a list of passages to be deleted from prewar texts still in use. Many middle-aged Japanese remember their teachers telling them which paragraphs and sentences to black out with the ink used for calligraphy. The occupation authorities also banned textbooks prescribing correct manners and morals, abolished the Emperor Meiji's Imperial Rescript on Education and ordered that new texts be prepared that would present an "objective" view of Japanese history.

The Japan Teachers Union charges, however, that the democratic ideals of the occupation authorities have gradually been betrayed. Following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the Japanese government, with the approval of MacArthur's headquarters, launched a purge of teachers suspected of being Communists and instituted a requirement that the Japanese flag be raised daily and that the national anthem be sung in the schools. The teachers union and the Socialist Party have drawn a connection between the encouragement of nationalism and the signing of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in San Francisco in 1951. From that time forward, Japan was to be an ally, not the "Switzerland of the Pacific" that MacArthur had envisioned. The 664,000-member teachers union, which represents 80 percent of the teachers in Japan's primary and secondary schools, sees a link between the education ministry's guidance campaign and the growing power of the right in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party following its surprisingly lopsided victory in the 1980 national elections.

Recent L.D.P. policy statements calling for more stringent monitoring of public education bear out the charge. "Rigorous screening must be faithfully and conscientiously ensured," the party's research council recommended earlier this year. "The teaching guide should be amended to allow the most appropriate selection of textbooks." The council proposed the enactment of a "comprehensive law to govern all aspects of school textbooks from screening, adoption, publication and supply." Masanori Itoh, an official of the teachers union, showed me several passages in social science books that the L.D.P. had found offensive. The passages all dealt with atom bombs and nuclear power stations. "The L.D.P. idea is to hide as much as they can about the war," Itoh explained. "They want to remove our 'nuclear allergy.'" He maintained that the L.D.P. intends "to remove our three nonnuclear principles—nonintroduction,

THE ANTS OF ARGOS

There stood the citadel—nothing left.
We climbed it anyway, for no other reason
than to say we'd been someplace
where earth and air had been quietly
rearranged. Nothing was left

but you and me, standing above the small
and empty harbor flashing blue.
Around us wild thyme ached in mauve
and sun-baked stones fumed piquant
wherever shepherd boys had pissed
to hear them sizzle. Even the ants,
marching skyward, had been in Corinth.

Rita Dove

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nonpossession and nonmanufacture of nuclear weapons." Ultimately, "they want to reverse Article Nine of our Constitution," he said. "They want to bring nuclear arms into Japan."

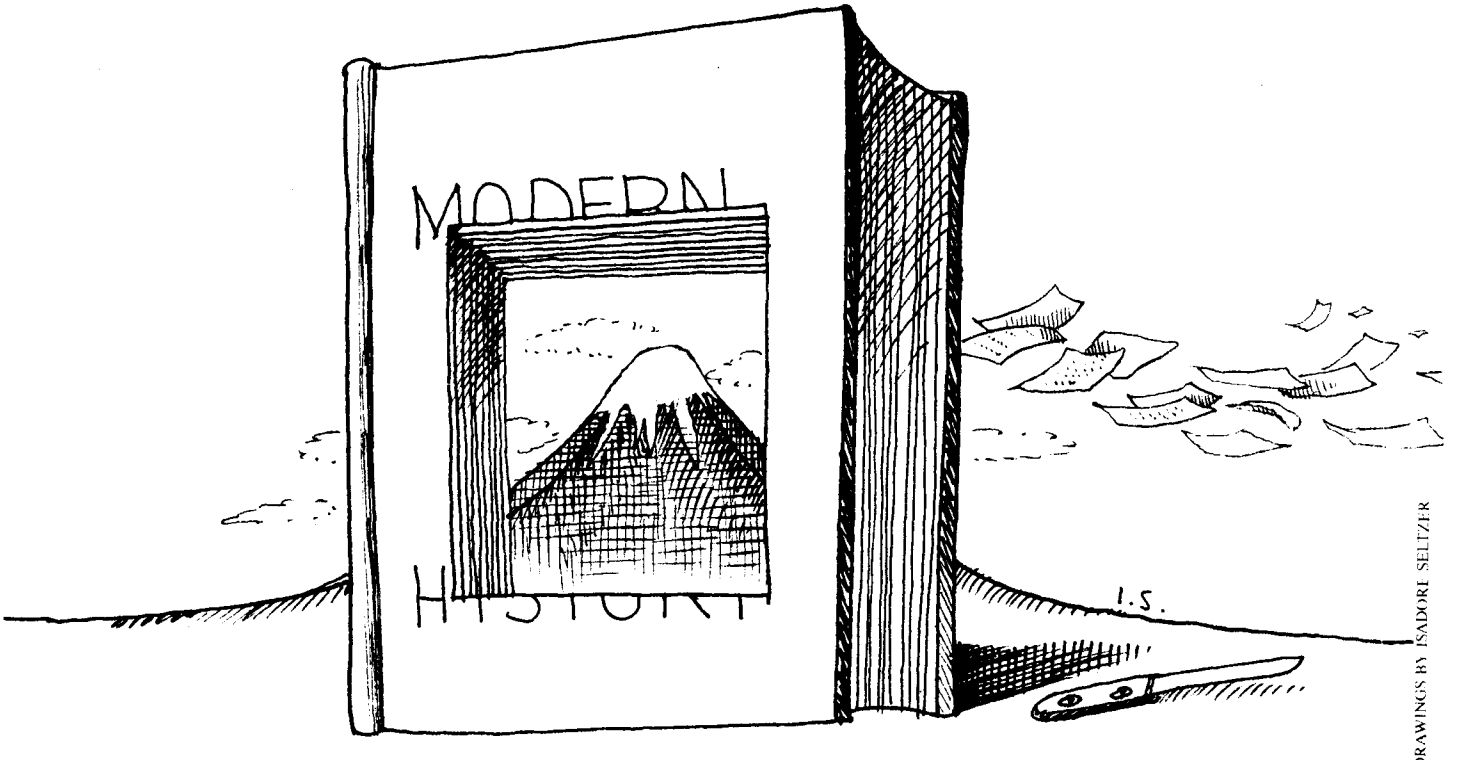
The Liberal Democratic Party's influence on publishers is now such that the School Textbook Publishers Association recently agreed to revise a widely used junior high school civics text two years ahead of schedule in response to the party's criticisms. And revelations last August that the association had made illegal contributions to a number of party members in the Diet showed that it is eager to retain the party's good will. As the *Mainichi Shimbun*, a major daily newspaper, pointed out, it was not at all coincidental that the association's contributions "increased sharply with the start of L.D.P. criticism of school textbooks."

In the face of mounting attacks from the left, officials of the Ministry of Education portray themselves as impartial arbiters fending off demands from extremists of all political hues. "Textbooks must be neutral, objective and universal," said Kazuo Fujimura, chief of the ministry's textbook division. "We have both left- and right-wing sides, so we must stand in the middle." Calling the L.D.P.'s criticisms "a little exaggerated," Fujimura said he was equally opposed to the teachers union's suggestion that the government enunciate "just one rough principle and let the teachers select the books for their classes."

Critics of the teachers union argue that teachers inject their own biases into the curriculum. In a book published this year titled *Questionable Junior High Textbooks*, a team of researchers headed by the president of Tsukuba University, an institution known for its conservatism, enumerated examples of what it considered slanted writing. One text "gave its readers the illusion that Japan is treading the road to militarism," the study said; another referred to American troops stationed on Okinawa without mentioning that the United States had returned the island to Japan in 1972. The Tsukuba University group was also exercised over a passage that blamed the L.D.P. for voter apathy. Actually, the passage contended that voter boredom was a result of the party's having been in power too long—a view that the Socialist and Communist parties say is "objective truth."

While publicly claiming "impartiality," ministry officials privately lean toward censorship. Tatsuo Tanaka, former minister of education, indirectly proposed a permanent censorship body when he said he favored a council to oversee the current reviewing system. Tanaka made this suggestion after a meeting with Motofumi Makieda, chairman of the teachers union, who had asked that the ministry's de facto guidelines be made public. As it is now, Makieda said, the ministry's inspectors are working "in secret" to make textbooks conform to policies of the government and the Liberal Democratic Party.

Recently, in a speech to the Diet, Seisuke Okuno, former minister of justice, argued that textbooks that cast doubt upon the constitutionality of the Self Defense Forces would only confuse Japanese youth. Commenting on the speech, a columnist for the *Asahi Shimbun*, Japan's second largest daily, wrote, "His call for the deletion of views contrary to the government reminds us of prewar education." The nation's largest paper, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, editorialized, "Obeying government instructions will give the impression the textbooks are compiled by the state." And *Mainichi* urged readers "not to forget the regrettable lesson of the past when schools were turned into arenas of contest between progressive and conservative forces." But that is what they are rapidly becoming. □



DRAWINGS BY ISADORE SELTZER

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THE TEST-BAN CABLES

Inside a U.S.-Soviet Arms Negotiation

DALE VAN ATTA

On November 30, opening day of the arms-control talks in Geneva, chief U.S. negotiator Paul Nitze read a statement to the press that he said had been approved by the Russians. "We will not discuss publicly the issues on the negotiating table," was the essence of Nitze's announcement. Thus, at the beginning of the first act of the talks, the curtain of secrecy was ritually lowered—as it has been on all such negotiations in the past.

When Nitze and his colleagues on the Committee on the Present Danger were campaigning against Senate ratification of the SALT II treaty last year, one of their tactics was to imply that the American arms-control negotiators were simpletons who were easily out-maneuvered by the wily Russians. The agreement was flawed, they claimed, because far too many concessions had been made to the Soviet Union. Because of the secrecy that has traditionally surrounded such negotiations, those who took part in them on the American side could not publicly defend themselves.

Although records of the SALT II talks remain sealed, I have made available to *The Nation* copies of ten State Department cables, classified "Secret," reporting on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (C.T.B.T.). They provide a rare look at what takes place during actual working sessions of U.S. and Soviet negotiators. The cables were sent to Washington by U.S. representatives in Geneva and describe meetings held from October 1978 through February 1979.

The accounts in these cables leave one overriding impression: bargaining between the Soviet Union on one side and the United States and Britain on the other was tough and blunt-spoken. Far from giving away the store, the American and British negotiators extracted a significant concession from the Soviet Union. This was an agreement to allow the emplacement of ten seismic stations—black boxes that would accurately record every Soviet test of nuclear weapons—on Russian soil.

Before considering the cables in detail, let me set the stage. In the fall of 1977, President Jimmy Carter had laid the groundwork for test-ban talks between the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain. Initially, the United States proposed a comprehensive test-ban treaty of unlimited duration. This was subsequently found to be unachievable, and the time span was scaled down to five years and finally to three.

Since it would be impossible to verify compliance with the treaty without on-site monitors that would transmit their information to satellites circling the earth, the American negotiators insisted on the emplacement of "national seismic stations" (N.S.S.). The other parties agreed to the idea in principle. In the fall of 1978, the Russians appeared eager to complete the monitoring aspect of the C.T.B.T. talks, and President Carter expressed a similar desire to Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

And so on October 11, 1978, in a plenary statement delivered in the eighth-floor conference room of the Botanic Building, headquarters of the American negotiators in Geneva, the United States proposed that each nation accept ten seismic stations on its territory for the duration of a three-year treaty.

On October 17, according to the cables, three negotiators from the Soviet Union and three from the United States met for a three-hour working lunch at the Soviet mission. Speaking from rough notes, the head of the Soviet delegation, Dr. Adranik M. Petrosyants, quickly disposed of the amenities and announced that his country thought that ten seismic stations were too many for a three-year treaty. "Why are elaborate procedures needed for three years?" he asked. He also complained about the cost. The Russians, he said, were "not prepared to incur heavy expenditures of resources on verification measures for this brief period." Petrosyants insisted that "the cost of verification should be commensurate with treaty provisions. The Soviet Union is a wealthy country but one which spends its money wisely."

U.S. deputy negotiator Gerald Johnson responded that the American proposal was a serious one, reflecting the personal desires that President Carter had expressed to Foreign Minister Gromyko the previous month. Could Petrosyants be more specific about his complaint?

The Soviet Union had already conceded that verification measures were needed, Petrosyants replied, "even though the U.S. and U.S.S.R. clearly would not violate a three-year C.T.B." But he was unable to see the need for "precisely ten stations." His probing was clearly an attempt to find out how flexible the United States was on its proposal.

Another U.S. deputy negotiator, Alan Neidle, expressed disappointment at Petrosyants's remonstrations. The treaty was likely to be extended after the three years were up, Neidle said. The ten-station concept was a "serious practical proposal and there is no reason why the Soviets should not accept it." Neidle added that the Soviet Union must bear the blame if the talks bogged down. As the lunch continued, there were "occasionally sharp exchanges," according to a cable summary.

If the United States didn't want the talks to come to a grinding halt, Petrosyants argued, its negotiators should come up with "a range of acceptable numbers—not just one number." Neidle acted dumbfounded. "The Soviet side surely cannot be serious in urging us to propose a new number," he said. "We have made a proposal, a serious proposal and the Soviets should accept it. If they cannot, make a new proposal. If we cannot proceed, it will be because the Soviet Union is unable either to accept our proposal or to put forward a further proposal of its own."

Roland Timerbaev, a Russian delegate, echoing his boss, asked why the United States couldn't come up with a

Dale Van Atta, a reporter specializing in intelligence and defense topics, works with Jack Anderson.

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smaller number. Unruffled, Johnson retorted that he would not ask the U.S. Senate to ratify a treaty that didn't have a ten-station network as one of its provisions. What if the network did cost $20 million? That was less than the cost of a single nuclear test. Anyway, he added, "why should superpowers be discussing such a minor expense? It is important not to lose sight of our objectives."

In his report on the meeting, Johnson wrote, "The conversation revealed clearly that the Soviets are having an internal debate on whether they should respond positively to our N.S.S. proposals. Petrosyants, despite the fact that he came on very strongly at times, seemed to be particularly careful not to shut any doors."

At the session held on October 20, chief U.S. negotiator Paul Warnke began by saying that he was "deeply disturbed by the Soviet supposition that because of the reduction from five to three years duration there should be some general diminution of N.S.S. capabilities." In fact, he added, "with shorter duration, N.S.S. become even more important as a means of enhancing the possible durability of the C.T.B. regime."

Petrosyants, after some polite words about Warnke's distinguished career, accused the United States of "zigzagging" on the talks, a veiled reference, perhaps, to the vociferous opposition by some groups in the United States to the treaty. Nevertheless, Petrosyants said, he was "optimistic that those in favor of peace would eventually prevail." He proceeded to question the need for the number of stations proposed and suggested that both the United States and Britain "had overly rigid instructions." The representatives of both countries should go back to their leaders, he said, and return to the negotiating table with "more flexible instructions."

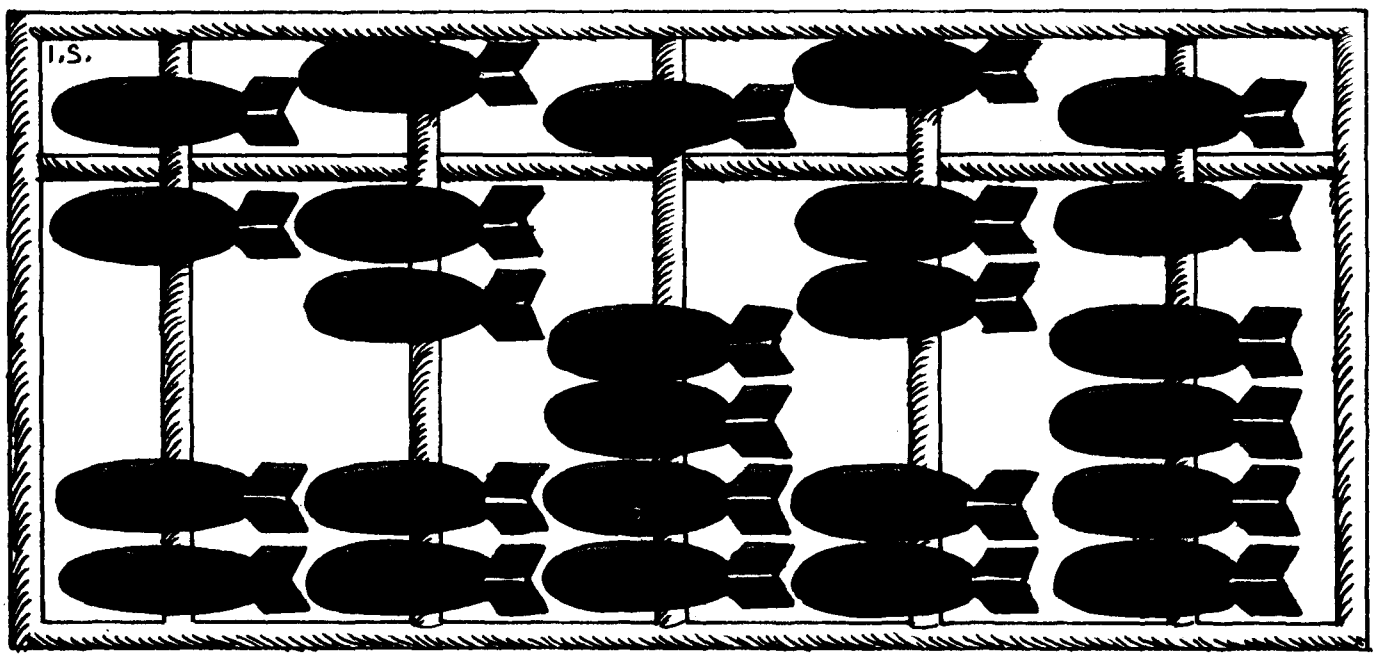
Warnke termed Petrosyants's "zigzagging" accusation "greatly exaggerated," and reviewed the negotiating history. The United States favored ten stations, he said, because that number would reduce the "uncertainties in verification [that] might lead to disharmony rather than the improved relations we are seeking."

As the talks continued into the afternoon, Warnke maintained there was a "sound technical basis" for a ten-station network. Each station would be located within about 1,500 kilometers of a nuclear testing area—or "areas of particular verification interest," as Warnke delicately called them. Only then could both sides be confident that the treaty was verifiable. Surely, he said, no one would want an earthquake to be mistaken for a nuclear explosion.

Petrosyants called Warnke's comments "correct and logical," and said a three-year treaty was better than no treaty at all. But he had a minor complaint. He had seen newspaper stories suggesting that the United States couldn't sign a three-year treaty because it had to periodically test the quality of the nuclear weapons in its stockpiles. These stories, he suggested, "have not appeared just by chance."

At a lunch meeting on November 3, deputies Timerbaev and Neidle discussed the seismic stations, and Timerbaev took pains to convey what they meant to the Soviet Union. As Neidle later summarized his remarks in a cable: "We should try to understand that Soviet acceptance of N.S.S. would be an unprecedented step, which was extraordinarily difficult for a great many Soviet officials to swallow. Never before had the Soviet Government accepted installation of verification equipment to operate continuously within Soviet territory. This was psychologically a tremendous step for the Soviets to take."

Timerbaev said he was repeatedly asked by other members of the Soviet delegation if it was "absolutely essential for the Soviet side to 'pay this price.'" It was difficult to argue with them, he said, since they had been in contact "directly with their principals in Moscow." (Each Soviet delegate reports separately to his superior in the military, the foreign service or whatever branch of government he represents. Unless Timerbaev had discussed it with his own principal, he wouldn't dare argue with those delegates



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whose principals were Politburo members.) Then, Timerbaev pointed out that one Soviet negotiator was "working like hell" to sell N.S.S. to the bureaucrats in Moscow. Finally, he implied that the Russians might consider accepting seismic monitors after the three-year treaty had expired. Neidle reiterated the U.S. position.

On November 15, Petrosyants announced that the Soviet Union was "willing to settle the question of establishing networks of national seismic stations," but only "with the understanding that equal obligations on this score will apply to all three of our countries." He added that he would return with "specific proposals on the numbers and location areas . . . in the nearest future." This was the first indication the ten-station issue might soon be resolved. And on November 27, it was. Petrosyants, in effect, accepted the ten-station proposal on behalf of the Soviet Union:

> Taking into account the U.S. proposal of October 11, 1978, the Soviet side agrees for the U.S.S.R., U.S. and U.K. to designate ten national seismic stations each for implementing the exchange of additional seismic data. The agreed location areas of these stations and the coordinates of their centers would be specified in a separate agreement between the U.S.S.R., U.S. and U.K.
>
> The U.S.S.R. delegation is submitting proposals on locations of national seismic stations on the territories of the U.S. and U.K. Our proposals are based on the principle of equal obligations for participating sides. . . .
>
> The proposals submitted by us today represent a big step toward meeting the positions of the U.S. and U.K. and we hope they will lead to speedy agreement on the treaty.

Though the Russian acceptance broke the main logjam, another hitch immediately appeared. Britain announced that it would permit only one station on its soil. Given Britain's smaller size, this seemed a reasonable position, but the Russians adamantly refused to permit an exception to be made.

The issue of the British refusal cropped up again on February 20 at an informal gathering in Petrosyants's hotel room attended by Johnson and Ambassador Herbert York. Timerbaev served as translator. Both Russians present insisted that the British one-station proposal was the United States' problem. "It is you, not we, that want N.S.S. Once the British agree to accept an 'equal obligation' we can immediately take up all remaining technical issues."

After a brief, aimless discussion, Petrosyants suddenly suggested that the United States sell or give the Soviet Union two sets of seismic monitors. "They said that action would speed up their own development and manufacture of such equipment," the cable summarizing the day's discussion reported. "They acknowledged we were ahead of them in the development of such equipment but stressed the only reason was that we were the party that wanted such stations and therefore we had started working on them very early, before they did."

York gently parried the suggestion, noting that everybody was "getting a little ahead of the conference agenda." But by the session of March 28, the United States had offered to allow Soviet scientists to study America's more advanced seismic technology. In his plenary statement, Petrosyants, not wanting to acknowledge what a help this would be, carefully said: "We are prepared to consider, as proposed by the U.S. side, the question of sending a group of Soviet specialists to the U.S. to familiarize themselves on site with an upgraded seismic station." (The Russians did visit an unmanned West Virginia station the following summer.) As though the U.S.S.R. were doing the United States a favor, Petrosyants added: "We express our agreement of principle to the acquisition of two sets of upgraded seismic stations from the U.S. Of course, the result of the Soviet specialists' trip will be very important in this question. . . ."

Frequently in negotiations with the Russians, their true thinking is revealed away from the bargaining table. That was the case on March 29 when one of the political officers of the Soviet delegation, Victor Slipchenko, had an informal conversation with a U.S. delegate, Barbara Schrage.

Slipchenko described to Schrage some of the infighting in the Kremlin over the seismic stations, knowing she would relay his comments to Washington. Slipchenko said that the "question of whether to agree to install N.S.S. had been hard fought in the Politburo, and 'it had been touch and go' whether it would be approved. In the end, approval was reached only on the basis that all three negotiating parties accept an equal number of stations." Therefore, the Russians "would not be able to accept any compromise that would allow the U.K. a lesser number of stations than the U.S.S.R."

Here the cables end. One landmark issue had been successfully dealt with, and another hurdle encountered. The bargaining in the C.T.B.T. sessions was probably typical of other negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States. There was, to be sure, none of the world pressure that attended the SALT talks, and for this reason, the Russians were perhaps more prone to strain at gnats, while occasionally swallowing a camel. But as this account of the seismic station breakthrough demonstrates as objectively as is possible, given that only the memorandums from the American delegates were available, the U.S. side often does the same. □

'MYTHS ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST' Is Available At LOW BULK RATES

A special issue of *The Nation* (December 5) devoted to breaking the logomachy jam in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by subjecting the emotion-sodden rhetoric that weighs down current thinking to a blast of fresh ideas. With stereotype-toppling articles by Boas Evron, Edward Said, Christopher Hitchens, Sadik Al-Azm, Edward Mortimer and Michael Reisman.

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Underground

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Nyack affair seemed more like war than politics—and a botched war at that. Yet we remembered some of the suspects from the world of politics, or from that nether world where politics and violence are blurred, becoming a bad politics of abstractions. Because it cannot mobilize mass support, such a politics beckons the way to murderous shortcuts.

The suspects, Boudin, Judith Clark and David Gilbert, three bitter-end holdouts of the Weather Underground, and Samuel Brown, a career criminal, said nothing. This silence was significant. It made their actions not politics at all, really, but crime. The last time Boudin spoke publicly, in the 1976 documentary film *Underground*, she talked of "revolution," of "destroying the imperialist system." But it was not clear then, and it is no more clear now, just what this revolution stood for. Throughout the film, and in the "Prairie Fire" manifesto issued by the Weather Underground in 1974, there were genuflections toward "Third World leadership," but that was not a politics, only a mystique. A strange sort of revolution, one not articulate enough to speak its own name. There was once a group of American revolutionaries who declared: "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation." Was it to be dismissed as a bourgeois conception, perhaps, that those who practice politics ought to make a case?

But then what happened in Nyack did not speak loudly of a decent respect for the opinions of mankind. Whatever one had thought of the members of the Weather Underground before, it could always have been said in extenuation, if not in defense, that they had never destroyed a human life but for three of their own: Ted Gold, Diana Oughton and Terry Robbins, who died when mishandled bombs blew up a townhouse on West Eleventh Street in New York City in March 1970. That blast, most people thought, had probably jolted the rest from their murderous plans. The twenty or so explosions the Weather Underground was credited with over the next five years took no lives. And by last year, almost all of its members had surfaced, some unobtrusively. Of those against whom charges were still pending, most got probation; only Cathy Wilkerson is serving time on a charge connected with the townhouse explosion.

The question now is, what possessed the remnants? What kept them sealed off in their nightmare underworld? The beginning of an answer might be that after all those years in a fantasy revolution, perhaps this was the only way a self-encapsulated remnant knew how to live. There were stories about a split in the Weather Underground in the late 1970s, after which some members chose to carry their politics back into daylight and others decided to stay in hiding. The relationship between the Underground and its black accomplices in the Nyack shootout remains murky. But to try to explain the killings according to organization charts would be superficial. It is the spirit of the members of the Weather Underground that, in the end, will account for what they did at Nyack, and it was their ideas that furthered and packaged and rationalized that spirit. Ideas have consequences, and the events of this century will attest that wrongheaded ideas are scarcely the least consequential. Although we do not know all the details of the underground trek, it is still important to make the effort to grasp its ideas and its history. The roots of destruction and self-destruction always grow tangled and deep.

The original Weathermen erupted with a surge of desperate will in the furious days of 1969. The group was formed just before the final convention of Students for a Democratic Society held in June 1969 in Chicago, specifically to fight the Progressive Labor Party's growing strength within the increasingly factionalized S.D.S. By mid-1968, largely to keep up with the P.L.P., the leadership of S.D.S. had begun to speak in Marxist-Leninist tongues, mistaking the clamor of insurgent youth, amplified by the media, for the tocsin of a revolutionary situation. The Weathermen's position paper for that convention, "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows," argued that you *did* need one after all, and they were it. The paper was a mélange of giddy Third Worldism, vintage Lin Piao and bluster about obedience to their cadre's will. It was vintage Che Guevara. But the Weathermen didn't recruit through force of argument so much as through style. They had panache. They radiated confidence as if to the manner born, and indeed a disproportionate number of them, compared with the general run of S.D.S. members, came from wealthy or upper-middle-class families. (Boudin's father was a left-wing attorney, as the press noted endlessly; David Gilbert's father had been a conservative Republican mayor of New Rochelle, New York.) They had permuted class guilt into a theory that permitted them to abase themselves before a stereotyped, united Third World and yet retain for themselves a special mission. They seemed the more legitimate revolutionaries in part because the P.L.P. offended most S.D.S. members with its Stalinism, tactical stolidity, ancient shibboleths (the revolutionary industrial working class *redux*) and moral stodginess (no drugs, no living in sin and no rock music). Also, the Weathermen included quite a few experienced organizers, and they could boast they had the support of the Black Panther Party, at least at first. Perhaps most important, there was the slaughter that went on and on in Vietnam.

Most S.D.S. members watched the battle between the Weathermen and the P.L.P. from the sidelines, appalled and fascinated, barely comprehending the lingo. But a cou-

Todd Gitlin, author of The Whole World is Watching *(University of California Press paperback), is working on a book about television entertainment.*

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ple of sentences into either side's argument there came the reminder: the Vietnam War was ferocious and criminal, and it was unlikely it could be stopped by nonviolent means. True, the antiwar movement had driven Lyndon Johnson from office, but now Richard Nixon was occupying the White House. And after four years of increasingly larger, more diverse and more militant demonstrations, and after much success in turning both public and elite opinion against the war, the movement seemed stalled. There were no signs of a letup in the fighting, only signs of escalation.

So the Weathermen drew much of their raging inspiration from the raw fact that the war went on. And the longer it went on, the less inclined most people on the left were to look too carefully into the humanist credentials of those opposing it. Here were the Weathermen, spunky and personable, displaying an indisputably total commitment at a time when most activists were pulverizing themselves with guilt at being white and American and, most of all, ineffectual. Ten years of New Left activity, the greatest portion of it nonviolent, had accomplished much for civil rights and student dignity. It had rekindled a radical confidence that had been extinguished by McCarthyism, and it had mobilized hundreds of thousands of people against the Vietnam War. But it had failed to produce a coherent vision of a small-"d" democratic society, it had failed to cross the class divide and mobilize the working class, and it had failed to find a convincing route to needed national reforms.

If the great looming war went on, then it seemed plausible to many radicals and to many liberals on their way further left that capitalism did require imperialism, that imperialism manifestly required mass slaughter and that whoever opposed imperialism was on the side of the angels. From this it followed that the world was neatly divided into revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. Thus, the task was no longer ending the war but "winning" it. It was necessary to "bring the war home," in one slogan of the moment, to "resolve the primary contradiction," in the more cumbersome Maoist phrase.

This was the streamlined logic in which the Weathermen imprisoned themselves, and they were by no means the only ones on the New Left to believe it. What was lost in the process was any sense of the complexity of the American system and the rest of the world. By 1969, deep cracks had appeared within the upper reaches of both government and the economy, but the Weathermen had no patience for draggy old politics—not, at least, while the war was going on. And what if there was no "primary contradiction" at all, but a Third World as multifarious as the battered people of color at home? And what if the oppressed, like most people, believed in reform, not revolution, and would turn to revolution only if all else failed, and failed again, and seemed likely to fail in perpetuity? But those who asked such things in 1969, who counseled calm and coalition, who spoke of flexibility and the complexity of politics and doubted that a revolution was on the American agenda, were accused of having made their peace with a savage society. The reformers and, God help us, the "social democrats" seemed hopelessly smug, hopelessly compromised, hopelessly discredited by some graceless attacks on the early S.D.S. and hopelessly elder. For the New Left organizers of working-class origin, the doubters were too "middle class," too New Yorkish. For later New Left leaders, who tended to be of wealthier origins, the reformers doubtless seemed too plebeian. These cautionary intellectuals were not to be found "on the streets" but in studies overlooking Manhattan's Riverside Drive. They were not heard.

Boldly, the Weathermen smashed past all annoying doubts. By mid-1969, many activists on the left had come to agree with their simplistic conclusions. Though only a few joined the Weathermen, many marched to the same beat. Many others were paralyzed and could barely oppose them coherently. In the name of what deeply persuasive strategy for ending the war could they do so? This was a time when many felt like the person who said, "I feel like turning myself into a brick and hurling myself." Reason seemed caution and caution was an encumbrance. The Weathermen provided the ideological luster and derring-do to convert this mood to action.

They quickly recruited a few smart New Left veterans. Boudin was an experienced civil-rights activist who had spent several years in the 1960s organizing white welfare mothers in Cleveland.The slow progress of the work and the provincialism demoralized her. Then, like many others, she was swept up in the demonstrations during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. She was one of the "Stink Bomb 3," arrested for polluting the Hilton that week.

Another recruit, David Gilbert, had been part of the theoretically inclined faction in the S.D.S. chapter at Columbia (known as the "praxis axis") that had been upstaged by Mark Rudd's daring "action faction." By the time of the campus revolt in the spring of 1968, Gilbert was already a graduate student at the New School for Social Research, where he was co-author of a lengthy paper on the theory of a "new working class." Widely distributed among S.D.S. members and whimsically known as the Port Authority Statement (a play on S.D.S.'s convening charter, the Port Huron Statement), the paper was a rationale for a project to organize professionals in New York City into a Movement for a Democratic Society (M.D.S.). Gilbert was concerned with the problem of how to graduate from a student movement into a more enduring left. But according to someone who worked with him before he became a Weatherman, he soon found M.D.S. insufficient. In the words of this former comrade, he began to "grovel toward Mr. Action."

The distance Boudin and Gilbert traveled from 1967 to 1969, and from Columbia to the townhouse Boudin fled in March 1970, was greater than the distance from the townhouse to Nyack. Once the Weathermen were swept into the logic and style of 1969, all that followed was tactics. At every impasse, the Weathermen upped the ante: double or nothing. The Weathermen could enfold both Rudd and Gilbert. They and their comrades buried the New Left, or its lingering possibility, by denying there could be anything new

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under a Marxist-Leninist sun. Participatory democracy, nonviolence, political coalitions . . . all that was an excuse for doing nothing. They heralded the prospect of a "black Vietnam" in the United States, as if the prospect of bloody war anywhere could be palatable. Even though the same people would die in a "black Vietnam," as were already dying in American uniforms in Vietnam, pacifism had to be plucked out. Privileged whites had to shed their "white skin privilege."

So the Weathermen were born of that fiery guilt that raged through the left in the late 1960s. They were obsessed by a need to prove themselves worthy of the blacks who best matched their—and the media's—preconceptions of the right-on revolutionary. Whatever the relationship between the Weather Underground and the Black Liberation Army is today, a pattern was set more than a decade ago. At first the Weathermen looked to the Black Panthers for support; Eldridge Cleaver gave them their day, though Fred Hampton thought they were "Custeristic" and would bring the wrath of the police down on the ghetto. They possessed, or were possessed by, a vocabulary that enabled them to finesse any embarrassing doubts that others might have about their revolutionary legitimacy. And they had no trouble finding a theoretical rationalization of their class origins. In their "You Don't Need a Weatherman" statement, they had scorned the notion "that there is a magic moment after we reach a certain percentage of the working class, when all of a sudden, we become a working-class movement," and asserted, "*We are already that* if we put forward internationalist proletarian politics" [emphasis added]. Presto! Equipped with this kind of vulgar Leninism, a few "affinity groups" of the privileged could become a working-class movement.

They insisted that small bands of revolutionary heroes would be victorious because they were riding the crest of the great, undifferentiated wave of the Third World revolution. The rest of an agonized, bewildered movement could be sloughed off like old skin. So S.D.S., an organization that began by echoing Albert Camus and C. Wright Mills, ended at the Chicago convention with members of the Progressive Labor Party standing on their seats, holding their Red Books in the air, chanting, "Mao, Mao, Mao Tse-tung" while the Weathermen chanted back, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh." Between them, they tore the movement apart. The Weathermen had no qualms about helping dismantle the largest organization of the New Left. On the contrary. They reveled in the thrill of cutting loose—true outlaws at last.

After the split with the P.L.P. in 1969, the Weathermen's logic, if that is the word, led them in two directions. On the one hand, they tried to inspire white working-class youths to join the revolution. They barged into schools in blue-collar neighborhoods in Pittsburgh and Detroit, pushed teachers around and delivered themselves of incomprehensible rhetoric; this they called "Jailbreak." But the kids were bewildered, nothing more. The Weathermen planted National Liberation Front flags in the sand at lakeside beaches in the Midwest and dared the kids to fight. Not much support came of it, but lots of punches were thrown and the Weathermen toughened. The second way also led straight to violence—not occasional outbursts of carefully targeted violence but indiscriminate violence as a matter of principle. "If it is a worldwide struggle," said Bill Ayers, Weatherman Education Secretary, in August 1969, "if Weatherman is correct in that basic thing, that the basic struggle in the world today is the struggle of the oppressed peoples against U.S. imperialism, then it is the case that nothing we could do in the mother country could be adventurist, nothing we could do, because there is a war going on already, and the terms of that war are set." They had a vision of a seamless world revolution, yet, at least subliminally, they could not have helped but notice that they were too tiny, and the United States too vast and recalcitrant, for the American phase of that revolution to succeed. They finessed the flaws in their vision with their own ferocious will. If the working class, or working-class youth, or the revolutionary youth movement, or any other abstraction of the hour wasn't hip enough to grant the Weathermen recognition as the vanguard, so much the worse for them. "The more I thought about that thing 'fight the people,'" Ayers said, "it's not that it's a great mass slogan or anything, but there's something to it."

In August 1969, Boudin helped write a manifesto titled "Bringing the War Home: Less Talk, More National Action." In this spirit, the Weathermen predicted that thousands would descend on Chicago in October for the "Days of Rage." Only 200 showed up, but they damaged enough property, injured enough police officers and precipitated enough arrests and headlines to psych themselves into a fevered sense of victory. Carrying clubs, they put into practice some of the most lurid passages of their original manifesto: "Pigs really are the issue" and, the dreadful standby, "Political power comes out of the barrel of a gun." From then on, each "action" redoubled their giddiness.

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Every demonstration, every bust, seemed to confirm the apocalypse. Two months before he was killed by Chicago police, Fred Hampton called Mark Rudd "a motherfucking masochist." One senses the Weathermen were awed by their own bravado, and by the thrill of having got away with mayhem. For them there was, as their unwilling poet, Bob Dylan, put it, "no success like failure." But they ignored the next line: "and failure's no success at all."

To sustain their momentum, they organized themselves into small collectives. Their élan was indisputable; they held the rest of the antiwar movement enthralled and in thrall. In these collectives, inconvenient individualism got reduced to pulp; battered egos were fused into the group. Sexuality—"Smash monogamy!" was the slogan of the day—and drugs were used to create, at white heat, a world apart. After the Days of Rage, I began reading *When Prophecy Fails*, a book written in 1956 by the social psychologists Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken and Stanley Schachter.

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Festinger et al. described a tightly knit millenarian cult which believed that on a certain date a great flood would engulf the land, but that flying saucers would land in time to carry off the believers. When the day came and no saucers arrived, many of the believers fell away; but the leaders, and their more dedicated followers, found a way to interpret their situation anew. The absence of the saucers somehow became evidence that they would come later, and so the believers intensified their commitment. I remember speaking to a friend of Bernardine Dohrn's about that time, a woman who said she too was reading a book that made the Weathermen comprehensible: *When Prophecy Fails*.

With a similar blind faith, the Weathermen—now renamed the Weather Machine—prepared to go underground. Having failed to arouse the vast support they had never really expected, they achieved the isolation their theory required. God knows how much they had to maul one another and their former friends to bring themselves to the high pitches required for their "actions." On Christmas 1969, at a "National War Council" in Flint, Michigan, they celebrated Charles Manson, proclaiming that "all white babies are pigs" and that they were "against everything that's 'good and decent' in honky America. We will burn and loot and destroy. We are the incubation of your mother's nightmare." A cardboard machine gun hung from the ceiling. Their favorite gesture at the conference was to raise four, separated fingers, symbolizing the fork Manson's gang had supposedly used as a murder weapon. Rudd contributed these thoughts: "It's a wonderful feeling to hit a pig. It must be a really wonderful feeling to kill a pig or blow up a building." This was the last public appearance of the Weathermen. The collectives dropped from sight. A few months later, the townhouse on West Eleventh Street blew up. The explosives manufactured there included bombs studded with roofing nails—makeshift copies of antipersonnel bombs like those the United States was dropping in Vietnam.

The Weathermen thought they were central to the history of the movement; they thought they were the world revolution incarnated in America. For years they haunted the dreams of the people who had worked with them in community organizations, in antiwar and antidraft projects and in free schools. ("KIDS ARE ONLY NEWER PEOPLE" was the slogan of the Children's Community School where Ayers and Oughton had worked.) Numerically, they were a sideshow, but they had marched into the main ring and taken it over. Many activists outside the Weather circles were too exhausted, and guilty, and unimpressed with libertarian or reformist alternatives to muster any real opposition. They were preoccupied with "gut-checking," inspecting one another for signs of bourgeois cowardice. By the time of the huge campus demonstrations against Nixon's 1970 invasion of Cambodia, there was no student organization to shape the uprising. A few days after the Kent State killings, the campus flareup fizzled. Over the next few years, many New Left veterans dropped out of the movement. Many women wrote off the entire male-dominated left as in-

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curably macho and militaristic. Yet the Weather Underground sustained some of the moral edge they had gained in 1969. Ever adept at manipulating guilty consciences, they became an obsession of the left, a substitute for practical politics. As Jane Alpert writes in her memoir, *Growing Up Underground*, they stayed underground because they thought "the idea of an underground had a powerful effect on people." But they failed to mobilize more than a handful. It was sometimes said about them, "At least they're doing something." But the great nonviolent demonstrations accomplished far more and at far less cost. Bombings helped eclipse their memory.

We don't know, of course, exactly what the members of the Weather Underground did in the years after the townhouse explosion. Even on their own terms, they accomplished little in the 1970s. The symbolic bombings became less frequent, and when the war in Vietnam ended in 1975, the Weather Underground was left high and dry. They had enough support to keep them safe while on the run, but not enough to count politically. In the film *Underground*, five of them, including Boudin and Jeff Jones, made much of the fact that they could march on a picket line undetected. They seemed unaware of the obvious: this was something anyone could do without having to go underground. Ayers admitted to having made many mistakes—mostly getting too far ahead of the masses—but denied that the members of the Weather Underground were terrorists or adventurists. Afterward, they produced no new statements. Almost all of them eventually chose "inversion," their arcane word for leaving the underground. Some continued supporting Third World revolutionary groups. Some went back to school, others went back to work; a few found safety by living with someone not involved with politics. Several wanted to raise families. Jones and Eleanor Raskin, who were wanted on a 1979 bomb-factory charge, were in the process of negotiating a surrender when the Brink's killings led to their arrest. (They were not, however, charged in the killings.)

But Boudin and the others, it seems, locked themselves in. They must not have been able even to *imagine* an alternative to the life they had carved out underground. That long-delayed flying saucer had still not arrived, but they no longer could imagine themselves other than waiting for it; they could only rev up for the ever-receding day of reckoning. The alternative to "inversion" was reversion.

But if they had long since lost their bearings in American politics, those who stayed underground had retained their facility for performing an odd minuet with prosecutors and the press. "We are the incubation of your mother's nightmare," indeed. It was as if they had surged into daylight to revive the lurid imagination of a high-riding right and provide new reasons for repressive legislation. Yet the right seemed almost as startled and confused by the Weathermen's violent re-emergence at Nyack as everyone else. On the floor of the House of Representatives, John Ashbrook fulminated, "Congress must take immediate action to halt the growth of terrorism." But he was not joined by his colleagues. Senator Jeremiah Denton said that his Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism was not planning any hearings on the Weather Underground.

Unfortunately for grand conspiracy theorists on the right, no less a personage than William Webster, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, declared last spring that "there is no real evidence of Soviet-sponsored terrorism within the United States." After the Brink's holdup, the F.B.I. took charge of a joint Federal-New York City Terrorist Task Force, and its director, the Bureau's Kenneth Walton, told a press conference, "We are looking at this as a major racketeering investigation and will look at possible

WRITERS CONGRESS RECORD

Ring's Side of It

"In the penultimate decade of the twentieth century, the leaders of the executive and legislative branches of our government, along with the commentators and editorialists in our foremost organs of public opinion, are engaged in a great debate about the fact that the United States and NATO possess only 9,670 nuclear warheads as against 8,135 for the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations. There are those who regard this as a safe margin and others who worry that the Russians having more separate missiles outweighs our having more multiple warheads. Since it is generally conceded that 1,000 thoughtfully distributed bombs would eliminate all the higher forms of life in either country, this debate eventually comes down to the pros and cons of being left with 8,500 unused warheads (our side) or 7,000 (their side)."

"I met Mr. Reagan on one occasion in my own home, but only because I shared that home with Ian and Alice Hunter, and Alice was the executive director of the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, an organization pledged to 'protect, extend and implement the ideals of Franklin D. Roosevelt.' Reagan was a member of the executive board.

"A year later, he was a 'friendly' witness and I an 'unfriendly' witness in hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which resulted in my serving a prison term for contempt of Congress and facing for fifteen years a condition I always thought of as being blacklisted. Until Mr. Reagan clarified the question during his campaign last year by announcing that there never had been a blacklist in Hollywood."

—Ring Lardner Jr., novelist and screenwriter, American Writers Congress, October 9-12.

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links between all these groups and possibly some foreign organizations." Soon thereafter, though, Walton thought better of this and denied he had made the statement; *New York Times* reporter Robert D. McFadden stood by the quote. The F.B.I. told *Newsweek* that "it had no evidence of current links between the Cuban Government and American radicals." A decade ago, F.B.I. break-ins of the offices and homes of left-wing activists had failed to turn up any persuasive evidence of incriminating "links," and the hard-bitten spirit in evidence at Nyack seems distinctly homegrown. Stalin in his revolutionary days also liked to finance his activities through bank robberies; but then again, so did Bonnie and Clyde.

If the charge of foreign connections was unproved, the tabloid press was predictably off and foaming. The underground was a sensation, and who loves a sensation more than sensationalists? "BLOODY WAR ON POLICE," screamed the *New York Post*'s front page headline on October 22, with "SIX DRAMATIC PAGES" inside. Floor plans of New York City police stations and a diagram of Nixon's New Jersey home, found in an East Orange, New Jersey, "safe house," were good for several more front pages, until "PREPPIE, PORN KING SLAIN" bumped them.

But for the most part, the centrist press, understandably bewildered, tacked quickly from panic to tentativeness. *Newsweek*, equating "radicalism" with "violence"—as did *The New York Times* at times—asked on November 2, "Was the radical left back in business and ready for blood?" and went on, "The answer seemed to be a qualified yes." Four pages later, though, they qualified the qualification, noting that "the F.B.I. didn't know whether the association [between the Weather Underground remnants and the Black Liberation Army] was a full-bore conspiracy against public institutions and private property—or a temporary marriage of convenience by two aging, shrinking groups." *Newsweek*, along with the prosecutors, soon calmed down, and two weeks later, when Jones and Raskin were not charged in connection with the Brink's shootings and Cynthia Boston, a member of a group called Republic of New Africa, was released when she produced an alibi, the magazine ran a story under the headline "The Plot Thins." They did not, however, mention that police had prevented Boston from seeing her lawyer—identified as a fellow member of the Republic of New Africa—for an entire week. *The New York Times* did editorialize against this blatant denial of constitutional rights. *Time* even reported that "several of the suspects complained that police had abused them," but neglected to mention the visual evidence, including Gilbert's black eyes, to support the charge.

But there was no shortage of voices looking for international hobgoblins. The favorite source material was a documentary film, *The KGB Connections*, produced by Norfolk Communications of Toronto. On October 23, an excerpt from the film featuring Larry Grathwohl was shown on ABC News *Nightline*. Although Grathwohl had infiltrated the Weather Underground in 1969 for the F.B.I., he was identified by ABC's Bettina Gregory as "a former member of the Weather Underground." Grathwohl said he had used Cuban embassies in Mexico and Canada as message centers for Dohrn and others on the run. Citing this documentary, *The Wall Street Journal* said: "We suspect that a thorough investigation would show that we are dealing with much more than a group of spoiled brats turned vicious criminals. We suspect the case would disclose that the Cubans have been actively aiding and abetting the Weather Underground and similar groups in the U.S. for years." But according to *The Washington Post*'s Kathy Sawyer, "F.B.I. official Roger Young called the Journal's charges of F.B.I. inattention 'utter nonsense.'" "No evidence uncovered thus far connects foreign interests to the criminal network being flushed from cover in the wake of the Brink's robbery, according to the F.B.I.," Sawyer wrote.

What will come of all this is probably not the sweeping repression that some on the left fear. A few new pretexts have been placed in the hands of those on the right who are eager to restore the golden days of wiretapping (before Nixon gave it a bad name) and eager to dismantle the Freedom of Information Act—though not even the F.B.I. has argued that it failed to capture the fugitives earlier for lack of sufficiently secret dossiers. Mostly there is new grief and new fear for a left that is badly in need of rethinking basic principles. Tiny underground groups cannot begin to address the world's vast peril.

The apocalyptic imagination in this century is only an instrument of suffering and waste. Abstract politics with abstract enemies and cardboard simplifications leads to recklessness; and the underground men and women were reckless from the start. They were reckless of ideas and reckless of the movement that for a while nurtured them. And when they started building antipersonnel bombs, they were reckless not only of the lives of innocents but of their own. They were a political nightmare from which the left is still trying to awaken. □

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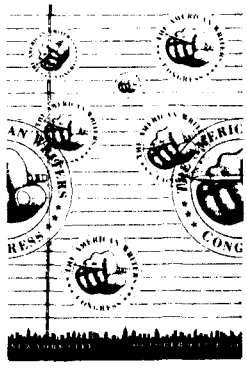

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The Therapeutic Retreat

ANN DOUGLAS

NO PLACE OF GRACE: Antimodernism and the Transformation of Modern American Culture, 1880-1920. *By T. J. Jackson Lears. Pantheon Books. 375 pp. $18.50.*

Released a month or so ago, Jackson Lears's impressive study, *No Place of Grace*, has received several favorable notices. The book's merits are many, important and undeniable, even as its reception illustrates how trends tend to influence which books serious reviewers will celebrate.

Lears has produced a fresh and massive intellectual history of the period between 1880 and 1920, when a group of "antimodernists" tried to withdraw from the prevailing direction of American culture. One can justly make the claim that *No Place of Grace* restores and reinterprets a crucial part of American history. Lears's method is impeccable. He skillfully interweaves his interpretations of the period with the biographical data of his subjects and provides a detailed checklist as an appendix. He is able to clarify the affluence and the significance of his protagonists, who are a grab bag of Orientalists, medievalists, craftsmen à la William Morris, settlement-house patrons, back-to-nature advocates, followers of the various mind-healing cults, social and political elitists, socialists, agnostics and Roman Catholic converts, many of whom were engaged at different times in several of these pursuits. Whether they were people of influence, like Henry Adams, or marginal figures, like William Sturgis Bigelow, all of these individuals suffered from and expressed a dissatisfaction with the increasingly secular and fragmented nature of late capitalist society. Lears is acute and persistent in his emphasis upon the phenomenon of secularism: "God, if there be a god," author, teacher and activist Vida Scudder prayed daily, "make me a real person."

What Lears discovers is that while the protests of these intelligent and literate men and women were genuine, they often fed into, and helped to create, today's "therapeutic" (a word Lears rescues from the misleading definition given it by, one must remember, a younger Philip Rieff) consumer society. As described here, this is a society that emphasizes shopping in its broadest sense, even when faced with economic regression and disarray. It is a society that reifies the well-being of the individual self just when that self appears most narcissistic—an eager victim of health fads or of an alarming conservatism—and it does so at a time when the individual's opportunities for genuine satisfaction through a commitment to forces outside of and greater than himself are not available. This retreat to the therapeutic, Lears suggests, was not only unproductive at the time, but is still capable of doing further damage in a culture already full of consumer goods for the "repair" of the needy self.

The frequent bouts of neurasthenia, the long stays in bed, the restless trips abroad, the physical and psychic pains that beset Lears's characters were in part a response to their early programming for lives of hard achievement. Yet their periodic collapses also suggest to Lears that individuals such as architect Ralph Adams Cram, critic Van Wyck Brooks and authors Francis Crawford and Percival Lowell knew the partial futility of their protest, even sensed its complicity with the objects of their dislike.

We are in that world of paradoxical self-defeat, detected so often by writers who have studied American culture of the last four decades. American scholars have generally been either afraid of or skeptical about the applicability of Marx's stern dictates to the American scene. Marx would certainly have argued that no escape was possible until the economic structure of society was revolutionized, and Lears studies people—and usually with second-rate minds at that—concerned only with the superstructure, people who lacked the energy and the eccentricity to forge an independent course through the forest of cultural cliché.

Lears has every right to these subjects and to the Freudian methodology they entail. No one can demand labor history or radical history from a historian so clearly competent and concerned elsewhere. One only wishes he had stated more clearly his bias and the reason for it. After all, the years between 1880 and 1920 were also peopled by men and women reading Marx, organizing unions, fighting poverty, writing anti-capitalist tracts and literature. Socialism and Populism—America's indigenous varieties of radical activism—peaked during these decades.

The scholarship here is flawless, trustworthy, extensive; the footnotes occasionally make as good reading as the text. Lears's thesis—that antimodern protest furthered, as much as it checked, what it ardently protested—is far-reaching, sound and provocative. *No Place of Grace* is among the few really interesting works of intellectual history to be published recently; it stands in quality alongside George Forgie's brilliant analysis of the coming of the Civil War, *Patricide in the House Divided* (Norton, 1979). This pairing brings to mind a question: Why has Lears's book received so much more attention than Forgie's?

Undoubtedly, Lears's choice of the premodern period is responsible for much of the critical interest in his book, and that is as it should be. Americans today find themselves confused citizens of a diminished world power. American intellectuals are understandably interested in the origins of this dilemma, and especially in those who first anticipated and analyzed it, as Lears's documents show his subjects did. The attraction of studies like Forgie's, on the other hand, depends in part on interest in the historical antecedents of the activism of the 1960s; such superb scholars of the slavery issue as Martin Duberman, Eugene Genovese, Herbert Gutman, David Brion Davis and Nathan Huggins located these antecedents either by implication or directly in the antebellum decades, years marked by religious controversy and political, racial and sexual debate. Such a shift in interest, from the

Ann Douglas is a professor of English at Columbia University. She is author of The Feminization of American Culture *(Knopf) and is currently completing two studies of modern culture:* Clytemnestra Kills Again: A Child Is Being Murdered *and* Terrible Honesty: Secular Culture in New York City, 1919-1935.

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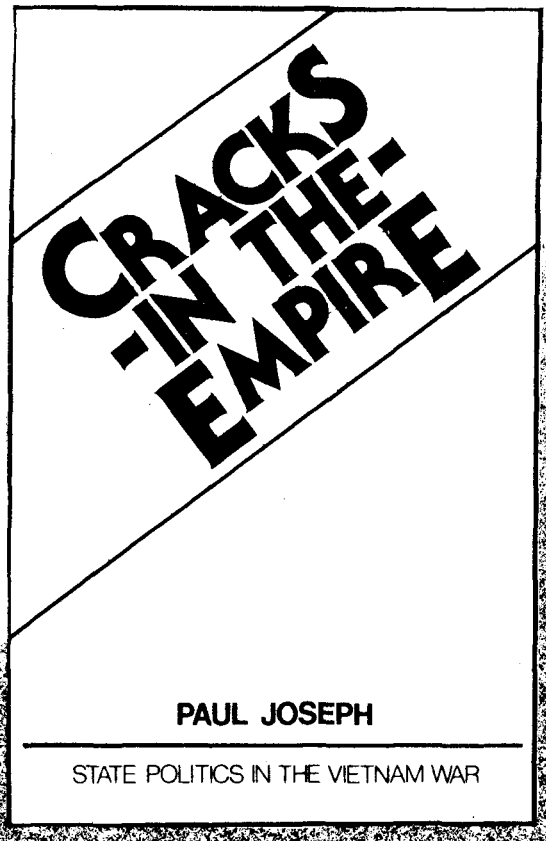

PAUL JOSEPH

STATE POLITICS IN THE VIETNAM WAR

"War is a continuation of politics by other means." **What was the Vietnam war all about? What does it say to us today, in the age of Reaganism, about the practice of politics and the limits of state power?**

Cracks in the Empire links the theoretical issues surrounding the nature of power and the political process in the United States with the specific history of U.S. intervention in Vietnam. *Cracks* details the interaction between the Vietnamese resistance, the domestic anti-War movement, and the evolution of American imperial policy. But the author leads us beyond this specific history into the process of State politics. He examines the shifting alliances and contradictions within the ruling class, the interplay between foreign and domestic interests and policies, and the interface between economics, politics, and ideology. To fully reveal the determinants of Imperial policy, *Cracks* places American intervention within its full international and domestic context—the role and interests of the leading socialist powers, the impact of the Sino-Soviet dispute, and the relevance of the strategic arms balance are all examined. Domestically, the author measures the effect of racial crisis, the civil rights movement, trade unionism, and presidential campaign politics on the conduct of the War.

At a time when Washington is mapping a return to confrontational politics, *Cracks in the Empire* provides an incisive and multi-dimensional analysis of the limits of American power.

Cracks in the Empire is a valuable contribution to the history of America's involvement in Vietnam, and to the discussion of the functioning of the American state. What Joseph has to say on the way policy is made goes well beyond the issue of Vietnam and is urgently needed now.

Ralph Miliband, Brandeis University
author, *Marxism and Politics*

Joseph admirably works his way through Marxist and liberal theories to arrive at an original understanding of what took place in Washington during the Vietnam Era. The relevance of what he has to say should be pondered by all those watching a new administration contemplating another intervention in the Third World.

Alan Wolfe, Queens College
author, *The Limits of Legitimacy*

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1850s to the 1920s, is no doubt inevitable. The trend is right, but it is unfortunate when it is responsible for excluding from our attention as important a book as Forgie's.

This query about the timeliness of *No Place of Grace* leads finally to my deepest sense of unease with the book. The perhaps inevitable tendency to look for a hero amid the figures Lears has resurrected results in his searching and moving examination of Henry Adams's life and thought. Adams emerges, unlike many of the well-meaning, interesting, yet defeated temporalizers with whom Lears deals, as a man who arrived, after a protracted and exhaustive pilgrimage of mind and heart, at a full and brilliant honesty about the unresolved ambiguity of the modern antimodern position.

Lears seconds one's longstanding suspicion that America, the oldest modern country in the world, as Gertrude Stein put it, was too "modern" to produce real modernists like Guillaume Appollinaire or Stein herself, for that matter, who lived her formative years abroad. Lears's distinction between the antimodernism in Europe and that in America is clearly defined and correct. Adams did not abandon his deeply traditional religious needs and intuitions—needs that Lears describes as central to all the antimodernists he discusses; yet Adams was also imaginative enough to live with, as they often could not, the state of active doubt that followed from his inability to accept any of the traditional foundations of belief. Adams's doubt did not leave him prey to the temptation of the secular forces of positivism, science or the emerging therapeutic world view that captivated and deceived many of his contemporaries. Adams, the "hero" of this ambiguous cultural scene, locates himself, in Lears's penetrating analysis, behind a careful and creative doubleness, and one understands and admires him for this. But why, in the bulk of the book, did Lears so often choose to examine the partially defeated? He resurrects Van Wyck Brooks's staggering achievement, yet this resurrection is not typical.

Why did Lears, for example (and the examples could be multiplied), discuss Scudder at great length and not Jane Addams, who, as her autobiographical writings and Allen F. Davis's excellent studies have shown us, was also highly educated, affluent, neurasthenic and in quest of authenticity? Addams rightly appears in the list of antimodernists in Lears's appendix. Initially patronizing to the immigrants whose ablest upper-class spokesperson she became, she acted and learned, and did not "turn her face to the wall." Did Lears ignore Addams because she found a partial solution to her cultural malaise in her work at Hull House, a solution that committed her to social change?

This reader could not entirely escape a sense that *No Place of Grace* is itself partially caught in the trap it so ably delineates. Lears suggests, and Freudian thought looms large here, that a troubled, mature reserve, like that of Henry Adams in the face of grave cultural and social dilemmas, is the best one can hope for. Yet much evidence from the author's period intimates other possibilities. Then there are our own pressing needs to get beyond the negative criticism of a period a half-century away and to reach for personal and social change; these needs express themselves in efforts toward fresh thought in a belief that change is possible. Such needs lie beyond not simply the elected subject of Lears's work but even its remotest implications. In *The Question of Lay Analysis*, Freud wrote:

> The ego learns that there is yet another way of securing satisfaction besides the adaption to the external world. . . . It is also possible to intervene in the world by changing it. . . . This activity then becomes the ego's highest function. □

Obscure Chinamen

D. D. GUTTENPLAN

THE GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980. *By Jonathan D. Spence. The Viking Press. 464 pp. $19.95.*

"I always wanted to be historical," wrote Gertrude Stein in the preface to her *Selected Writings*, and, in a way, she was. Still, the belief that the truth of history is at best a distant cousin to the truth of literature is our prevailing orthodoxy. Without belaboring the point, it ought to be apparent that we now draw our lines more narrowly than in the days when John Keats was writing home to his brother, Cardinal Newman was apologizing for his life or Lytton Strachey was refusing to let His Eminence off so easily. The house of literature, which once had rooms enough to accommodate letters, biography and history, has been much reduced.

Judging by *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, Jonathan Spence yearns after the truth of literature. The example of Strachey is apposite here, for Spence has written what might well be called "Obscure Chinamen," a set of interpolated biographies of members of the Chinese intelligentsia little known to the West, whose lives in sum are meant to stand for the Chinese revolution in much the way that Strachey's portraits in *Eminent Victorians* evoke Imperial England.

The life stories of two men and one woman, all activists of some sort, form the main threads of Spence's narrative, which attempts to combine an oblique view of the Chinese revolution with the more familiar pleasures of epic storytelling. Beginning with the Confucian scholar and reformer Kang Youwei (1858-1927), whose story takes place while the Manchu empire is poised on the brink of dissolution, Spence also introduces Lu Xun (1881-1936), the poet, short story writer and hero of the People's literature, and Ding Ling (1905-), unsinkable feminist and literary commissar.

From the rule of semifeudal warlords that followed the eclipse of the Qing dynasty in the early twentieth century, Spence works his way through the first days of the Chinese Republic, the United Front alliance of the Nationalists and the Communists against the Japanese, the Communist revolution at the end of World War II, right up to the fall of the "Gang of Four" and China's adoption of the "Four Modernizations" in the last few years. For a reader like myself, virtually ignorant about how 800 million people (more, according to Spence) came to call their leader "Chairman," emancipated themselves from centuries of poverty and ended up embracing Richard Nixon, Coca-Cola and Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought, all more or less simultaneously, *The Gate*

D. D. Guttenplan is an editor and a freelance writer.

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of Heavenly Peace provides many facts but few satisfactions.

In a book that pretends to be about "the Chinese and their revolution," the Chinese people are strangely absent. The book is in fact only a history of the revolution from the point of view of a few members of the intelligentsia, which in a people's revolution is something of a limiting factor. The people as depicted by Spence are essentially passive; they figure chiefly as corpses, massacre victims or objects of forced collectivization.

If we consider *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* not as people's history but as a piece of new journalism or as a "nonfiction novel," we realize quickly enough that not only is Spence no John Dos Passos, and his book no *U.S.A.* (a novel which successfully combines historical sweep and literary brilliance with a documentary presentation), he is not even Norman Mailer or E. L. Doctorow. We learn more about the nature of violence and marginality in America in ten pages of *The Executioner's Song* than we learn about the Chinese revolution in all of *The Gate of Heavenly Peace.*

It may seem unfair to compare Spence to these writers, but what else is a reader to do with a book whose author says that his characters are "in some senses parallel to the members of the chorus of a Greek play"? Though possibly apt, the implied comparison is by no means to Spence's advantage. Greek plays are short, dramatic and presented in a rhetoric more vivid and poetic than everyday speech. *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* has none of these virtues. Spence does use novelistic techniques—he shifts locales and circles around events—all the while digressing ironically, but the result is history for pulp fiction fans. It is precisely when considered as literature that the book's flaws are most apparent.

In only one of his portraits does Spence succeed in his stated aim of allowing the reader to feel he *knows* the characters. Perhaps inspired by his subject's own acidulous talent, Spence's portrait of Lu Xun is the best part of the book. The son of an opium addict and grandson of a corrupt official, Lu's *A Call to Arms* became the literary manifesto of progressive Chinese nationalism. A Communist and founder of the League of Left-Wing Writers, Lu would later do battle with the narrow-minded canons of "proletarian" art. His politics and poetry aside, how can we resist a man who, upon meeting George Bernard Shaw in 1933, remarked: "As we stood side by side, I was conscious of my shortness. And I thought: 'Thirty years ago I should have done exercises to increase my height!'" Even Lu's prejudices have their portion of charm, as in this quick slice at Futurist poetry: "Oh, steam whistle!/ Oh, Lenin!"

By comparison with the portrait of Lu Xun, the sketches of Kang Youwei and Ding Ling are unconvincing. Some of the difficulty may lie with their inferiority as writers. A combination of hustler and bureaucrat, Kang spent much of his time soliciting money from overseas Chinese for a variety of organizations, including the Society for the Study of National Strengthening, the Know Our Humiliation Society and the Society to Protect the Emperor, all of which he headed. Here is the raw material for a fascinating portrait, but in Spence's hands every incident is reported with flat sincerity. Narrative tact shades into excessive modesty, which shows itself as an unwillingness to discriminate among details. Spence's claims on our attention, like Kang's appeals to the Emperor, are made in a voice so self-effacing as to be nearly inaudible.

Ding Ling, who from the translations provided here seems a second-rate Katherine Mansfield (a writer who was revered to excess by the Chinese), was nonetheless a leading figure in the Chinese literary scene of the 1920s and 1930s. Arrested by the Goumindang, Ding escaped to Yanan, met Mao, wrote poems to the glory of the eight-hour day and was made editor of the history of the Long March. Eventually she became editor of the *Literary Gazette*, only to be purged twice by Mao, once at the urging of the infamous Jiang Qing. Both times it was Ding's feminism, her unwillingness to see that, in the face of class struggle, unity must transcend differences between the sexes, that landed her in trouble.

Between purges, Ding occupied herself by denouncing various old friends as "appeasers of the rulers" and Goumindang sympathizers. As the Chinese equivalent to a "friendly witness," her character is on balance an unsavory one, but by the time we read about her vindication in the aftermath of Mao's death, we have long since ceased to care. What in the hands of a more adventurous author would be the stuff of fiction is treated here as scenery and statistics; Ding's story reads like the biography of a chess piece.

The book's final chapter brings us to the present, but how much the wiser for our trouble? Readers who enter *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* in the hope of discovering what really happened in China in the last eighty years will be disappointed. In the case of land reform, for instance, since Spence never explicitly sets forth even the approximate contours of the feudal system that operated under the Manchus, the nonspecialist reader has no way of understanding what the Communist program meant to people's lives, hopes and expectations. After he had redistributed land on an unprecedented scale, Mao decided in 1955 that land would have to be collectivized. Whether or not there was resistance by the previously landless peasants, and if so how much, we are never told.

Similarly, although most of the characters in *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* are writers, Spence never states the size, either relative or absolute, of the literary community to which he makes constant reference. Who read Ding's stories? How many people in China could read in 1936? In 1976? Finally, the extremely important issue of China's engagement with the West is alluded to, but never grasped.

Spence's lack of imaginative commitment to his material reduces history to a kind of arm's-length narration where everything has the same value. By trading in the novelist's license for the historian's authority, Spence loses the greatest asset a contemporary writer possesses—his voice. Not only does the historical monotony that results take *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* out of the running as literature, but it makes for bad history as well.

Without a voice of his own, how is an author to persuade us that anything happened, let alone that people's lives, power relations, even their language, have been fought over and somehow changed completely?

An effective history of upheaval must itself be in some sense revolutionary in order to reflect faithfully the immensity of change. Marx's writings on the consequences of the Industrial Revolution are as exemplary in this respect as is Virginia Woolf's depiction of England after World War I. As the historian of

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an earlier civil war put it:

> To fit in with the change of events, words, too, had to change their usual meanings. What used to be described as a thoughtless act of aggression was now regarded as the courage one would expect to find in a party member; to think of the future and wait was merely a way of saying one was a coward; any idea of moderation was just an attempt to disguise one's unmanly character; ability to understand a question from all sides meant that one was totally unfitted for action.

But then, Thucydides was writing literature. □

LINGO

JIM QUINN

It's a curiosity of the post-1960s depression of radical thought—some kind of isolationist gloom succeeding those happy years of rhetorical euphoria—that most of the interesting new political language comes from the far right. And is attacked by the left (and everyone else) as if invention were a fascist plot against the status quo.

Take Richard Nixon and his co-conspirators, men whose contempt for our constitutional freedoms was coupled with a rich metaphorical locker-room humor. A group designed to stop security leaks is "The Plumbers." "Let it all hang out," a bit of advice football players employ to encourage their teammates to perform wildly, gets twisted into H. R. Haldeman's "go the hangout route," meaning to defy convention and tell the truth. "Have good stroke with somebody" comes straight from the massage parlor—a superb Nixonian metaphor for the ability to influence troublesome prosecutors, investigators, etc. Yet, far from being admired for these inventions, the Nixonites were attacked as enemies of clear thought and expression—as if their metaphors were unclear or inexpressive.

The Ford and Carter Administrations gave us years of extraordinarily colorless language. But Ronald Reagan brought us hope: Reagan brought us Alexander Haig. And Haig was immediately attacked—across a political spectrum ranging from *The Times* of London to *Mother Jones*—for using expressions such as "I caveat that."

A word about *caveat*: It is of course a verb in Latin, and only became a noun after it was borrowed by English speakers and changed (or corrupted, if you prefer) by people who knew no Latin. And the verb is not even really new with Haig. The Oxford English Dictionary traces the transitive use back to 1662: "I would caveat this," from the Marquis of Argyle. The O.E.D. also said (back in the 1890s) that this use of *caveat* was obsolete. Thanks to our Secretary of State, it is no longer. A word, a good old word—something that pop grammarians are always worrying about losing—has been restored to us. What is the reaction of the left?

"There is cause for alarm here," says *Mother Jones* (August). "Any man who babbles this way is clearly out of control on some level—or possibly suffering from a nonfunctional-type syndrome. What the country needs is for a tough no-nonsense linguist to burst through the doors at State and declare, 'All right, gentlemen, I'm in charge here.'"

Bursting through the doors and outlawing language is, of course, just what a tough no-nonsense linguist would *not* do. That would be like a tough no-nonsense astronomer bursting into an observatory and outlawing pulsars. Linguists study language; they are not in the business of enforcing standards or caveating words.

But Washington does have just the kind of enforcer *Mother Jones* would love. According to "The Editorial Eye," a newsletter published by Editorial Experts Inc. of Alexandria, Virginia, "Plain English is still alive and well in Washington thanks to Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldridge. Not only has he issued a directive instructing those who write his letters to use simple, concise language, but he has also fixed some Commerce Department word processors to stop and flash DON'T USE THIS WORD! when they encounter a forbidden expression."

Alexander Pope in "Peri Bathos" and Edgar Allen Poe in "How to Write a Backwoods Article" are among the many writers who have satirically proposed the mechanization of writing, but it took our Secretary of Commerce,

Jim Quinn is the author of American Tongue and Cheek: A Populist Guide to the Language *(Pantheon).*

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urged on by the friends of English everywhere, to computerize the richness and the humanity out of English prose. The Editorial Experts provide a list of forbidden terms, and it is interesting to page through dictionaries and discover how many accomplished writers could not get their prose past the censors of a well-run word-processing center. Baldridge's machinery would stop the use of *subsequent to* to mean before (Jonathan Swift); *hopefully* (Nathan Pusey); *optimize* (William Gladstone); *input* (Sir Walter Scott); *to interface* (Marshall McLuhan); *maximize* (Lewis Mumford); *different than* (Oscar Wilde, Cardinal Newman, Addison, Steele, Defoe, Richardson, Goldsmith, Coleridge, Southey, De Quincey, Carlyle and Thackeray); *viable* (Leslie Fiedler, John Dewey); *responsive* (Milton, Shakespeare, Pope); *hereinafter* (Edward Sapir), and *effectuate* (Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Johnson).

There's more—but that will have to do. It demonstrates, at least, the anti-idiomatic and even anti-literary bias of most of our current efforts at language purification. And it leaves me room to remind leftists—people like the writers at *Mother Jones*—that Zbigniew Brzezinski never used *caveat* as a verb. Does that make him better than Haig? Woodrow Wilson and Adlai Stevenson were both accomplished in the academic dialect that pop grammarians such as Edwin Newman and John Simon think should be a standard for all English. Yet Wilson secretly invaded the Soviet Union after World War I, and Stevenson lied shamelessly in the United Nations about America's invasion of Cuba. American politicians act as they do because they are the functionaries of American capitalism. Of course the left opposes their actions. But to quibble with their words—often the most human thing about them—is to accept the values of the system itself. Thorstein Veblen, in *Theory of the Leisure Class*, put it this way:

> A discriminate avoidance of neologisms is honorific, not only because it argues that time has been wasted in acquiring the obsolescent habit of speech, but also as showing that the speaker has from infancy associated with persons who have been familiar with the obsolescent idiom. It thereby goes to show his leisure-class antecedents. Great purity of speech is presumptive evidence of several successive lives spent in other than vulgarly useful occupations. . . . It is contended, in substance, that a punctilious use of ancient and accredited locutions will serve to convey thought more adequately and more precisely than would the straight forward use of the latest form of spoken English; whereas it is notorious that the ideas of today are effectively expressed in the slang of today.

Nothing necessary to add to that. Except—That's telling the Commerce Department and *Mother Jones*, Thorstein. □

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FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Ashram
Ticket to Heaven

A prudent rule for those seeking a spiritual mentor is that they withhold themselves and their property from anyone who denies that he is the Messiah—thus leaving open the possibility that he may well be John the Baptist. I derive this word of caution from having seen two pictures that opened in New York City on the same day: *Ashram*, a documentary by the West German film maker Wolfgang Dobrowolny, and *Ticket to Heaven*, a Canadian production directed by R. L. Thomas. The institutions that are the subject of these movies differ greatly in atmosphere and method of operation, but they are alike in three respects: they draw young men and women who find themselves disenchanted with the workaday world; they induce in their disciples a disorientation that alarmingly suggests schizophrenia, and they are possessed of enormous wealth.

Dobrowolny, who made his film in 1978, deals with the ashram of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, a man who has been in the news recently. Not long after Dobrowolny's visit, Bhagwan closed down his pavilions and gardens at Poona, India, and moved his operations to a 64,228-acre ranch near Antelope, Oregon, which he bought for a reported $6 million. The number of his followers is estimated to be between 100,000 and 250,000, which suggests how the Rajneesh Foundation is able to deal in such very large parcels of real estate.

At first glance, the Poona community would seem to be a transcendental Club Med. A bulletin board lists the times of activities that appeal to various tastes and interests, and when not engaged in these sessions, the handsome men and women promenade about the well-tended grounds clad in garments of seemly earth colors. The whole group gathers in the morning to be addressed by the master, who rambles along in a vein of vague but cheerful platitudes designed to assure the faithful that the beauty of God lies within them. His gestures are slow and delicate; his voice is low, soothing and somewhat hypnotic; his sentences end in a slight hiss or whistle that might remind the irreverent of the gentle escape of hot air.

There is almost constant talk, by both Bhagwan and his spokesmen, of an undefined but allegedly powerful energy that lies somewhere beneath, behind or below our physical bodies and conscious minds. On special occasions, the master releases some of this energy for general consumption by rapidly oscillating his index fingers on the foreheads of two ecstatic subjects, to the accompaniment of stimulating music and the glad cries of the witnesses. This plunging into one's depths is pursued also by meditation, dance and chanting, and especially by encounter sessions, in the most violent of which naked celebrants gather in a padded room to vilify, pound, protectively caress, sexually attack and generally transport one another to the alleged catharsis of hysteria. Bhagwan is an enthusiastic advocate of unbridled sex as a convenient avenue to the state of spiritual love, and it was perhaps when rumors of these erotic exercises began to agitate the Indian authorities that the master thought it time to pack up in Poona and seek the wider landscape of Oregon.

Dobrowolny has fallen out with the Rajneesh crowd over the editing and distribution of *Ashram*, but when he made the film he was still a follower in good standing. He tried, he says, to give an impartial account of the community, and the overall views are not unattractive. It looks to be a rather jolly life for people who have the means and the leisure to pursue their inner voices wherever those may lead, and who show

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no reluctance to fling off their robes and engage in group tantrums. To be sure, the prolonged contemplation of one's navel may seem a selfish sort of vocation, and the continual chatter of Poona is excruciatingly boring, but all in all the atmosphere might be judged no worse than feckless.

It is when you come closer to the individuals whom Dobrowolny interviews at length that the setup begins to be alarming. These men and women once did useful, even demanding and important, work. They came to Poona, some of them say, for a brief holiday and ended up staying on for years. Here they now sit in the warm sun, smiling into the distance, babbling about how happy they are, how they have found peace and fulfillment, how deeply they adore Bhagwan and owe their bliss to his ministrations. Asked to say just how they have been changed, they start to flutter their hands and protest that it has all been much too ineffable to be put into words; it can only be experienced. God forbid. A scalpel is not the only instrument that will perform a lobotomy; group narcissism manipulated by a shrewd massager of souls will also do the trick. And now the huge bankroll has been brought to this country, available for the purchase of prime real estate and the recruitment of able people into the promised land of cosmic orgasm.

Ticket to Heaven has a much tougher, nastier and more immediately frightening story to tell. It deals not with seduction but with entrapment. The absentee villain of the piece is given no name but Father. However, the screenplay was derived by directors Thomas and Anne Cameron from a nonfiction work, *Moonwebs*, whose author, Josh Freed, joined a commune of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in an attempt to track down a friend who had disappeared into the Unification Church.

The movie follows a course somewhat similar to that of the book. David (Nick Mancuso), a tough-minded Toronto youth, is feeling at odds with the world after breaking up with his latest girlfriend. On impulse, he decides to visit Karl (Stephen Markle), an old friend who is now living in San Francisco. He is met at the airport by his friend and several attractive, exceedingly friendly young women, and carried off for a weekend in the country. Late at night, they arrive at a remote, rather primitive camp. David is wakened very early the next morning by boisterous shouts and loud music, and propelled into a day of unceasing group jollification. He is Jewish, brought up in a family with a sharp sense of humor and a very low tolerance for nonsense, and he joins the nonstop ring-around-a-rosy with skeptical reluctance. But Karl has disappeared, there is no transportation out of the place for at least three days and the girls look available.

As David learns too late, the girls are the first step in his programming. Apple-pie pretty and scantily clad, they are forever snuggling up to him. But sex is forbidden; it is lust, a defilement, the devil's snare. A man may look, he may touch, but he may not embrace. Then there are campfires, at which a loudspeaker in a tree plays the old campfire favorites. People talk about themselves, embarrassingly, tearfully; the more mawkish their confessions, the more they are praised and petted. David is importuned to "share" with his new friends. He resists, clinging to his self-respect, but the days pass (transportation seems to have broken down) and

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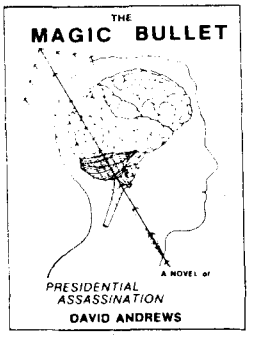

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finally, exhausted by the continual running about, deprived of sleep, fed a diet that seems never to allay his hunger, disoriented by the sexual teasing and the lack of privacy, David talks.

The camp, it turns out, is where the foot soldiers are broken to Father's will. Back in San Francisco, and now known as Heavenly Children, they are put to work. Clad in jackets and ties and in boarding-school dresses, they assemble each morning in a chapel whose altar is adorned with a photograph of a smiling Oriental and murmur prayers of fealty to Father. Then they fan out into the streets, pressing bunches of flowers at exorbitant prices on startled citizens who are told, quite falsely, that the money will be used for a drug rehabilitation center. When David, still struggling half-heartedly, protests this dishonesty, his mentor (Robert Joy) explains that it is Satan's money they take and that anyone who buys the flowers also buys a ticket to heaven.

By this time, David, short-haired, haggard, with a fixed glare and a slack mouth, is a hardly recognizable zombie. He is being managed by a cadre of clean-cut, smiling, cold-eyed and proficient agents who themselves look as though their minds had been seized by some malign intelligence from outer space. Closely watched by one of his guards, he telephones his family to say he is fine, but won't be coming home for a while. That moves a friend to take a leave from his job and fly out to California. He too is almost trapped by the Heavenly Children, but he makes it back to Toronto and, with David's family, plans a kidnapping rescue. Stealing a convert from Father's church is dangerous work, for the cultists are ruthless and they have the law on their side. The last half-hour of the picture is a fast, only-too-convincing melodrama.

Ticket to Heaven unsettles my conviction that I, at least, could never be brainwashed. Perhaps I am immune—young people seem most vulnerable to being imprinted by suggestion and example—but the film chilled me. The isolation is what does it, the absence of all the bench marks of normal, rational behavior. David is undone by his amiability. The cheerleader exuberance of the camp, the probing intimacy, dismay him, but he is constantly entreated not to be stiff-necked, not to spoil the fun. And, since it looks to him to be innocent, if inane, he ruefully joins in. Larry (Saul Rubinek), his friend from Toronto, almost does the same. He is saved by an older camper who is there in search of his missing sister. Together, the men keep each other sane.

Necessarily, the film speeds up the process of disintegration; David melts into a mindless lump like a snowman in a spring thaw. But though *Ticket to Heaven* is an expert suspense thriller, full of shocking details and peopled with characters both creepy and admirable, it was not made merely to run clammy fingers up your spine. Like *Ashram*, it can be read as fair warning that the body snatchers are still at their trade—only now they don't wait until you're dead. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Peer Gynt

When in the winter of 1868 news reached Henrik Ibsen in Rome that *Peer Gynt*, published a few months earlier in Copenhagen, had been assailed by most Scandinavian critics as "unpoetic," by which was meant unartistic, he wrote to a friend: "If my play isn't poetry, then it will be; the definition of poetry will have to be changed to conform to my play." The imperial manner wasn't foreign to Ibsen, and in this case, as in most others, it turned out to be justified. *Peer Gynt*: the centerpiece of Ibsen's *oeuvre*; the amazing picaresque journey into the ego and the soul whose protagonist stands with Dostoyevsky's and with Baudelaire's poetic "I" among the first exemplars of the modern self in literature; the first movie script, as someone has said, written thirty years before the first movies.

The text of *Peer Gynt* is more than 200 pages long; the settings shift from the fjords and mountains of Norway to the deserts of North Africa; scenes take place in underground kingdoms, on ice pinnacles, in trees, up in the air; there are explosions, a shipwreck, an episode in a madhouse, violent deaths. No wonder Ibsen himself once said, "I don't think the play's for acting." But it is, with all the immense strain it puts on the ingenuity of actors, directors and designers, and Ibsen knew it could be done. But that it's done infrequently shouldn't surprise us, nor is it remarkable that it's almost never produced in its entirety.

What makes the production of *Peer Gynt* by the Classic Stage Company so noteworthy is precisely that it's the first uncut version ever put on in New York City (in the United States, so far as I know) and only the sixth or seventh of any length. The play is being done in two parts, which may be seen on consecutive evenings or at matinee and evening performances on weekends; the whole thing runs about four and a half hours. Like the famous 1971 Berlin production by Peter Stein—to whom Christopher Martin, who has directed this one, acknowledges a debt—the work has been divided into eight "scenic chapters," four to a segment, instead of the text's five acts. And like Stein, Martin uses a number of actors to play the title role, in this instance four, to Stein's six. The idea has a lot to recommend it.

The rationale is that since Peer is a character without a true self, to have him played by different actors is thematically coherent. But, as is true of many aspects of this production, a shadow falls between the idea and its implementation, between intentions and results. I'll return to the four Peers in a moment, but first I want to take up some other aspects of this puzzling production, which satisfies and disappoints by turns.

Consider the physical decisions that Martin and his designer, David J. Goldberg, have made. It's surely right that with their minimal resources and in the C.S.C.'s small space they should have gone mostly for austerity and abstraction—no real sets, almost everything functional, with props brought in by the actors for each scene. Rope structures serve as trees, a billowing cloth as the sea, canvas shapes as mountains. Fine. But then why do they use projections only in the first sections of Part II, projections—mainly of Egyptian vistas—which moreover are never integrated into the stage action and instead work as distracting illustrations? And why do they go for such hurly-burly realism in the shipwreck scene, where the thunder blots out more than half the speeches?

This inconsistency, or dissonance, mars the production throughout. Some scenes are done cleanly, with sureness of touch; others are either muddled or wholly lacking in vigor and shape.

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Among the latter are the scene in the troll kingdom, the madhouse episode and the scene with Anitra in the desert. The last two occur in Act Four of the original text, admittedly the weakest part of the play (Ibsen, aware of this, once suggested that an operetta might be made of it), but there's no excuse for making things worse than they are. There's no excuse, really, for what lies behind the production's many inadequacies: the startlingly uneven quality of the acting. The C.S.C. is supposed to have rehearsed *Peer Gynt* for some ten months, but the radical incapacity of so many members of the company is a handicap no amount of time can overcome.

To go back to the four Peers: One is shockingly inept, another totally nondescript, the third has some talent and a bit of stage presence, and only the fourth, Ray Dooley, who plays section four in Part I and section five, which opens Part II, does full justice to the wonderful role. Dooley is sharp, energetic, intelligent; he clearly understands Peer, whose definition of courage is "to move with uncommitted feet among the tricky snares of life" and whose final revelation is that he's like the onion he peels near the end, all layers and no core. Patrick Egan does better in the final section than in the first, offering something of Peer's edgy exhaustion as his odyssey winds down. Tom Spackman, who does sections three and six, is a mere reciter of lines, while David Aston-Reese (sections two and seven) tests your patience every moment he's on stage, so inexpressive is he, so thoroughly *wrong*.

Among the rest of the company, which doubles and triples up, there's mediocrity and in a few instances something worse. Tom Spiller plays the troll king like a sleepy Hell's Angels leader, and Brian Lawson, with his high, wispy voice, manages to detract from Father Moen, Master Cotton and Dr. Begriffenfeldt. The women are especially weak: Karen Sunde's Mother Aase is all wide eyes, open mouth and monotonous delivery; Ginger Grace's Anitra offers some strange, ostensibly erotic movements and an accent indeterminable even by Henry Higgins. Patricia O'Donnell as Solveig smiles radiantly much too often, although she does periodically work up a radiance from somewhere deeper. And only John Camera—as Solveig's father, Hussein the scribe and the pastor—joins Dooley and Egan in giving solid performances.

Having said all this, I can still argue that this *Peer Gynt* should be seen. There's something admirable about the C.S.C.'s earnestness and dogged fidelity to the text and about what I have to call, not sneeringly, their amateurism. There may be moments when you'd rather have the written text in front of you than be forced to watch the stage, but still, it's all there. And there are some fine sequences. The last section is particularly good, doubtless because Egan, Camera and Dooley (who doubles up in the lovely role of the button-molder) are all prominently at work. Ibsen's sprawling, glorious dramatic poem finally comes through in these scenes, which almost wipe out the memory of the histrionic misdemeanors that have preceded them. □

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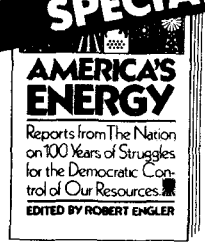
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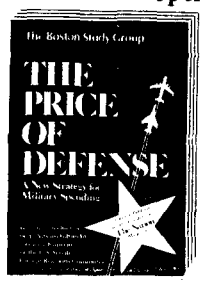

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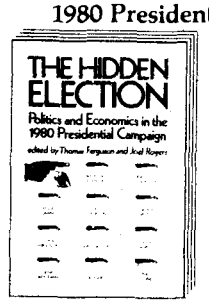

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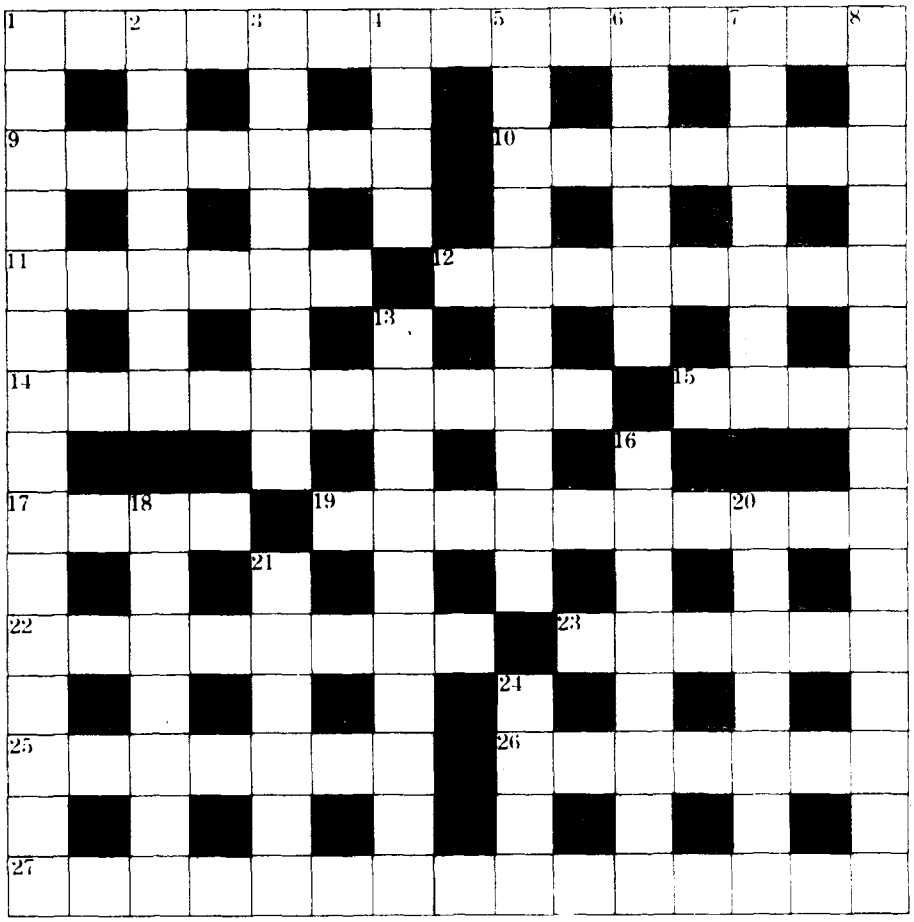

ACROSS

1 Somebody with a Cassius Clay and Cobb group of devotees, criticized by followers of Mao and Stalin. (11,4)
9 Stern guides, in a sense. (7)
10 Select one in the early race, about the highest class, as they say, all right coming back (4,3)
11 Somewhat middle-of-the-road-ish? (2,1,3)
12 Guards money overseas, and makes an effort with it. (8)
14 Something great in China comes back with a one-streetcar arrangement sometimes proclaimed. (7,3)
15 Soon this might be one of the most common words of attribution in Bartlett! (4)
17 Many a race is said to be won by one. (4)
19 Sifts road-surfacing material, possibly connected with the film that one sees. (6,4)
22 Equivalent to a sort of aunt, or a cable therefrom, possibly. (8)
23 A pert young woman gets in, but as far as insects are concerned, it's outside. (6)
25 Like one who takes delight in Solitaire? (7)
26 What could be nicer, as something to go with Old Lace? (7)
27 With a sort of 26, Uncle's at some trouble to get such as Physics and Chemistry. (7,8)

DOWN

1 One who really knows Roberts, or just some old Roundhead? (15)
2 Brick was often associated with its owner, as a calling. (3,4)
3 Like certain stage fare, relating to the vision about a certain period of time. (8)
4 Too much like a certain well-known English orchestra?" (4)
5 Cursed caper, timed badly! (10)
6 Cathy's sort might be looked on with favor by those who can afford such! (6)
7 More writing of such things . . . (7)
8 . . . a play, for example, by someone else? (5,10)
13 Like many appliances, one of the best, and a bad liar gets about a hundred. (10)
16 The far from innocent type seems to be definitely not followed! (8)
18 Not a one of the regular players sits awkwardly to receive the means of it. (7)
20 An enormous maritime disaster. (7)
21 If you want a different escort, duck out of it! (6)
24 In part, alchemy might be responsible for such powder. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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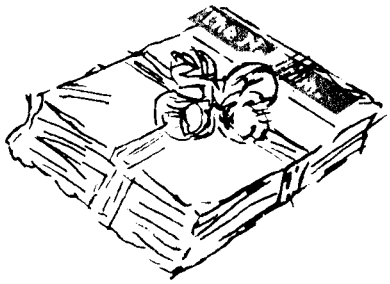

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